

THE GAY EXPERIENCE

JULY 1975

\$1.00

VECTOR



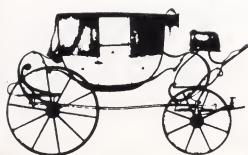
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Editorial

READER FEEDBACK

The fact that you have this issue of VECTOR in your hands right now indicates your support and approval whether it was on an impulse buying or a subscription. Therefore, I am hesitant to ask for even more support but. . . VECTOR is currently the oldest continuously published gay periodical in this country and perhaps the world. Any publication of any kind that manages to survive for eleven years represents a kind of miracle. In looking over the past 132 issues, I am struck by the incredible variations from pure crap to pure gold, and it is with humility that I realize the degree of support we have received from our community, which has seen us through the bad months, and the bad mouths and especially from our advertisers, who, more than anyone, have felt the pinch of tight money.

VECTOR has been the baby of many fine minds over the past eleven years, and each editor has brought his particular stamp to the book via both editorial and graphic specialties. For the past twenty-seven months it has been my baby, and with the recent addition of Art Director, Jay Manning, to our staff, I am finally at a place where VECTOR is as I feel it should be, given our budget and limited resources. I am proud of the past issue (which was the most successful seller in our eleven-year history), and, of course, this one. Eut, that's not enough. We are producing a magazine for YOU, and at this point I have no defense for the style or content of VECTOR. We have arrived. Now we need feedback from our consumers, and if our staff philosophies are not in harmony with our readership, we're all in trouble and something has to give and change. There is a temptation (*Play-girl*, *VIVA*) to hit upon a successful formula and run the same magazine month after month after month until each issue actually becomes a cliché in a self-duplicating aura of boredom.

Consequently, I call your attention to the survey on page 35 and respectfully urge you to make your opinions known to this staff. We want to address our book to the entire gay community and in order to do so we MUST know where we are on the mark and where we are not.

Our ivory tower is actually made of glass and built on a hill of sand. The glass is two-way and the sand is constantly shifting and in order to remain in business, and on top, we have to know for whom the bell tolls and, within reason, ring with our readership.

Please. Take the moment and a stamp. It's important.

The last two presidential editorials dealt with politics in a time of exciting legislative change. And we won! This month political editor, Frank Fitch, has chosen fiction (Page 37) to deal with the impending struggle on the part of straight society to repeal the freedoms we were to have gained on January 1, 1976. This is our first REAL show-down, and if we blow it, it will be clear indication to the rest of these United States that medieval witch hunts are both approved and desired by Mr. and Mrs. average Christianizing citizen. We are more than six million. We know our history. It's up to you. •

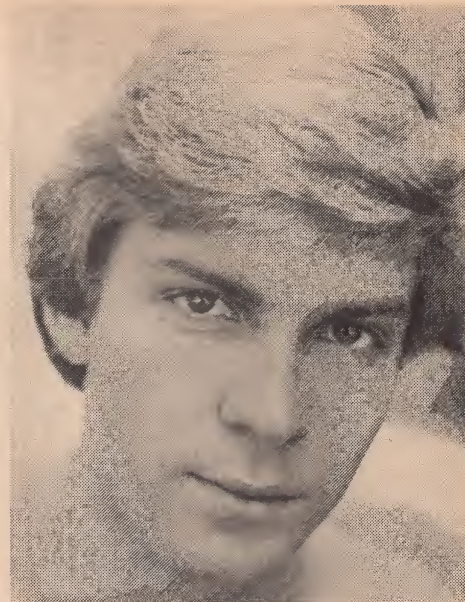


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THE GAY EXPERIENCE

VECTOR

Our Eleventh Year

July 1975

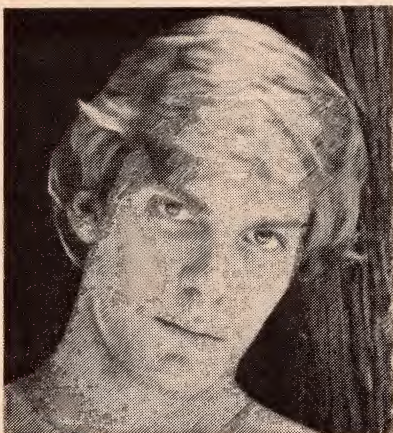
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WED: 8 pm General Membership Meet, 2nd Wed, SIR Members only.
7:30 Ways & Means Com, meets before Board of Trustees on 1st/3rd Wed, of month, Members only
8 pm Board of Trustees MEETING Members may observe.
8 pm SIR Open Meeting & Open House 4th Wed, every month—Programs vary, Open to all.
FRI: 8 pm Conversation Group, Topics vary, Open to all.
7:30 Rainbow Deaf Society, 1st Fri, each month—in sign language.
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Letters

The best yet

To paraphrase Coue, "Every day in every way VECTOR is getting better and better." Your June issue is the best yet. Cover-boy Mark Howard, especially de Winters' photo on page 31 (where he is fully clothed), is superb. What a beautiful face.

Marvin's interview with Michael Kearns was great—went right out to buy the book and Pickwick (LA's largest) was already sold out!

Your articles are getting better, too. Thanks for such good reading and interpretation of the gay scene. Long may your banners wave.

*Joseph W. Kessler
Los Angeles, Calif.*

An author speaks up

First of all, I meant to write sooner to thank you for doing such a nice job with *A Day at the Beach*. It certainly was pleasant to see my name at the top.

And, by the way, speaking of quality—Karl Maves' *Sweet Rosewell O'Grady* in

the Feb. issue is not only one of the best stories you have ever published, but the illustrations and layout were absolutely perfect—there's hope for gay literature and there is even, thanks to you, a forum where gay stories can be presented in a fresh and delightfully witty way. Thank you. Thank you.

*Thomas G. Felt
Alexandria, Va.*

Some disagreements

I wish to compliment you on the June issue of VECTOR. It is simply the best I have ever seen. Don't know how to praise it enough.

Despite some disagreements with the philosophy of the article (which is really neither here nor there) I especially want to thank you for the article by Ruben Vasquez. I'd really like to see more really serious articles along that vein.

Again, my compliments.

*Jack Trujillo
Palo Alto, Calif.*

Progress in this state

My compliments to your magazine and to S.I.R. for the great progress it has been making for the communities of this state.

*Gary Centman
Gay Center for Social
Services, San Diego*

Hope springs eternal

Just a note to say how impressed I am with the quality of the writing and the subject matter of VECTOR in the past few months. As a life member of S.I.R. I have been disenchanted with this organization as it became irresponsible and meaningless. Perhaps there will be a revival. Hope springs eternal!

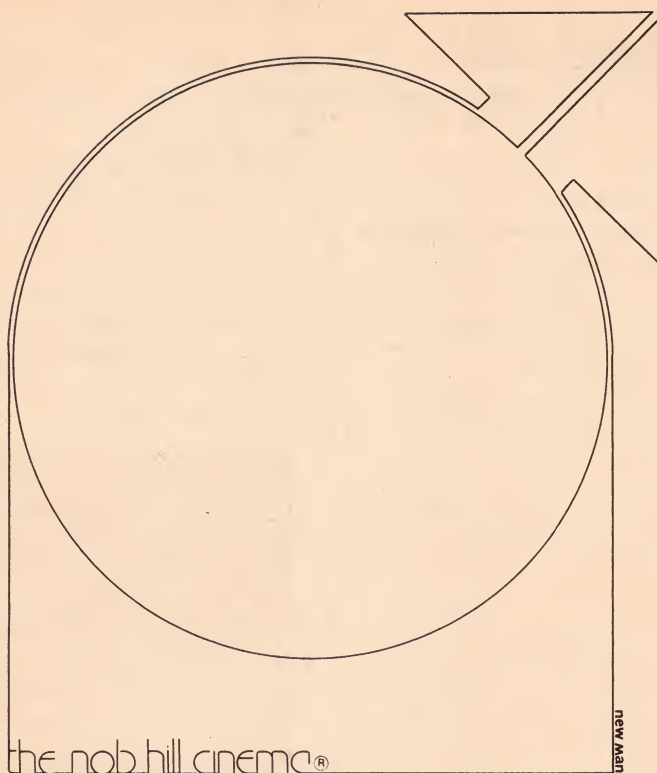
If you are interested I would consider writing an article for you called "When You're Alone" and directed to the large group of the shy but competent professional group of gay men in San Francisco (and the U.S.), who can find no easy way to meet people who make sense. In an

11TH S.I.R. ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

JULY 18TH

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anti-intellectual age attainment becomes a burden of disenchantment.

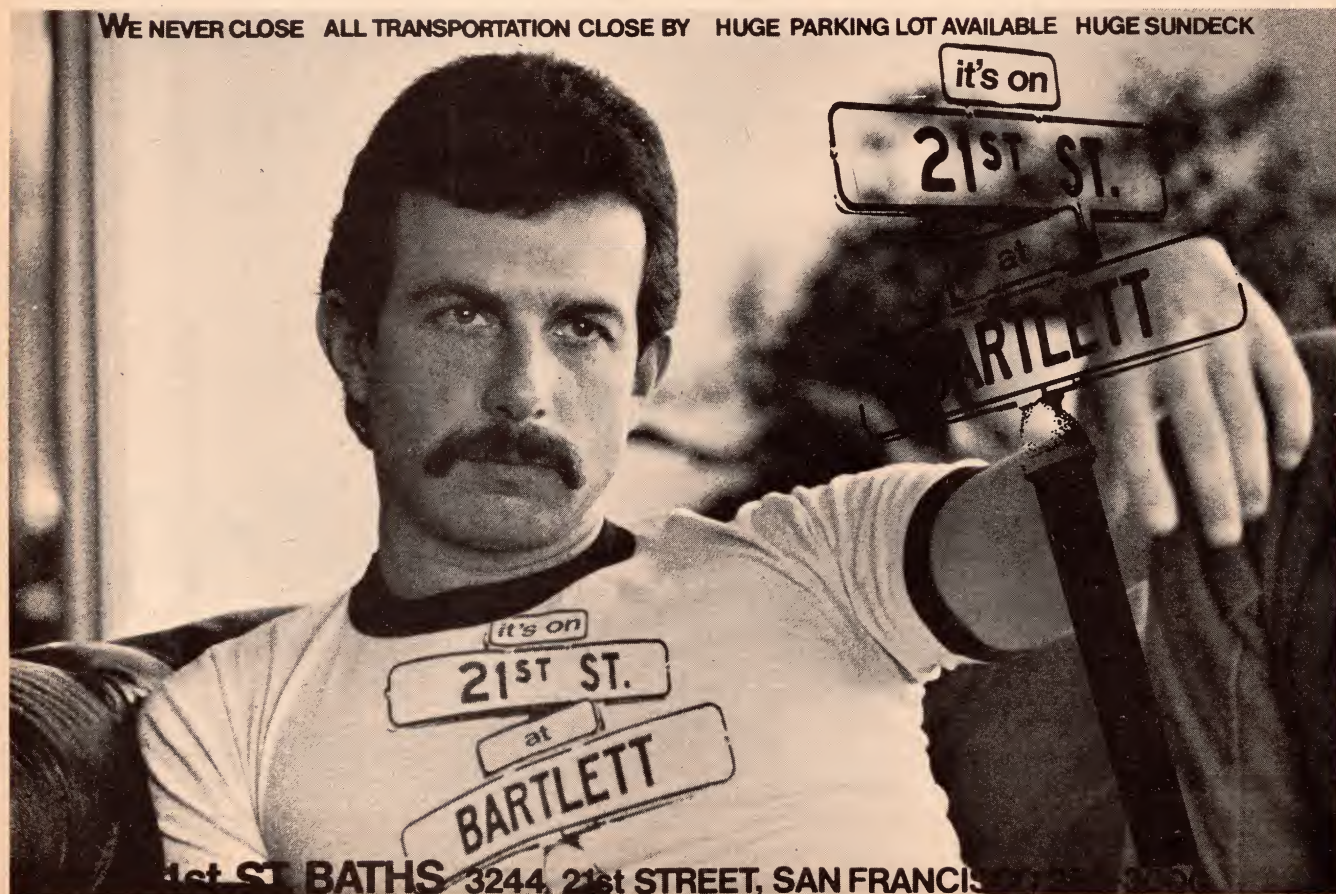
*Dr. Guy M. Everett
San Francisco, Calif.*

The media is the paper cost

This is the first time I have ever written a "letter to the editor" and I find it very difficult because I am so impressed by your June issue that I can't see straight.

I was distressed when VECTOR moved from glossy (and very expensive, I know) paper to what you have now. Then for a few months I could see the struggle of your pretending you were still glossy but weren't. I also hated the fru-fru neon type of "chic" art work BUT, since Jay Manning became art director (who is this genius?) I have observed the perfect marriage and union between your message and your media supplies. I'm a graphic artist so, naturally the "look" of a magazine is what first attracts me to buy it. Mr. Manning has brought a harmony and a tight unity making, I believe, VECTOR extremely readable, enjoyable seeable, and seems to have married well with your editorial staff and policies. Hey—thanks, huh?

*John Cook
Philadelphia, Pa.*



East Bay

GAY MEN'S RAP

The oldest established permanent floating gay men's activity on the continental side of the Bay is the East Bay Gay Men's Raps, which meet every Friday night starting at 7 pm in the First Baptist Church on the corner of Haste and Dana Streets in Berkeley,

On any given Friday night as many as fifty to seventy men (from Berkeley, Oakland, and the farther reaches of Alameda and Contra Costa counties) gather for a community meeting and various kinds of small groups. The raps have been going on for almost three years now, facilitated by the Raps'

Collective, a body of nine men who function as an ongoing encounter and training group. Besides leafletting extensively and providing refreshments, collective members draw together encounter, discussion, nonverbal communication, and ongoing problem-solving groups every week.

About half the men who attend are regulars, many of whom take some responsibility for the raps' continued success and growth. But as many as a third of those present on a particular Friday will be there for the first time. A small orientation group usually is held before the community meeting in order to acquaint newcomers with the over-all format and to get a sense of people's needs and expectations.

Periodically special events occur at the raps: massage groups, demonstrations of postural integration, or show-and-tell groups in which people share their poetry, music and other creative efforts. There have been film and video showings on topics as diverse as Chilean resistance to fascism and the Ohio Gay Pride Week. Projects initiated by the raps range from picnics to a conference on gay male sexuality, to a gay rights platform that was adopted by Bobby Seale and Elaine Brown for the Black Panther Party in their Oakland campaign two years ago, then approved in part by the Berkeley City Council. There have been discussions on youth, age, bodies, jobs, cruising, cooking, and every other interest gay men know. One night people role-played "gay bar."

But the main focus at the raps continues to be on the "here and now" of people's feelings about themselves, their lives, and one another; on the interactions that take place between individuals. The groups are meant to be supportive in an atmosphere for you to take some risks if you want to, in order to grow

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with one another, develop a sense of community, deepen our understanding of ourselves, each other, and life in this society. The raps afford people a chance to make new friends, to meet other gay men in a more open and honest, and less ritualized way than ordinarily occurs in bars or baths.

The diversity of gay men's lives is reflected in the attendance at the raps. There's usually a substantial number of black and other third-world men. From a base three years ago, mainly in the campus and hip community (when the raps began as part of Gay Men's Night at the Berkeley Free Clinic), the typical group now includes many different kinds of men: working people from Oakland, older gays and younger ones from all walks of life. These differences and similarities often form the basis of the discussions. Nor is attendance restricted to those who live in the East Bay. Gays from San Francisco and even down the Peninsula regularly come to the raps. If you want more information about the raps or the collective that puts them on, call John, at 654-1578, or Tom, 843-2459.

Nothing sustains the raps but the energy and contributions of the men who come to them and make them what they are in order to meet their needs. It's something we build for ourselves and for one another. Whether you're looking for a place to live, or need to share some feelings, or want to turn people on to something you're involved in, or just want to come and help celebrate the raps' upcoming third anniversary, come see for yourself some Friday night soon.●

Survey: page 35



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THE GRIM REAPER

In response to several complaints concerning the "inaccuracy" of the dates/signs below, we call your attention to the fact that Jeff is dealing with SIDEREAL ASTROLOGY

Dec. 17-Jan. 15	Sagittarius	Mutable
Jan. 16-Feb. 13	Capricorn	Cardinal
Feb. 14-Mar. 15	Aquarius	Fixed
Mar. 16-Apr. 14	Pices	Mutable
Apr. 15-May. 15	Aries	Cardinal
May. 16-Jun. 16	Taurus	Fixed
Jun. 17-Jul. 17	Gemini	Mutable
Jul. 18-Aug. 17	Cancer	Cardinal
Aug. 18-Sep. 17	Leo	Fixed
Sep. 18-Oct. 18	Virgo	Mutable
Oct. 19-Nov. 17	Libra	Cardinal
Nov. 18-Dec. 16	Scorpio	Fixed

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by JEFF

Any star gazer, when asked to state which is the most beautiful planet, will invariably nominate Saturn. When seen through a small telescope, Saturn's golden beauty creates wonder and delight. But Saturn's beauty belies its astrological implications. Saturn is the planet of frustration, inhibition, corruption, and lack. It is often referred to as "the grim reaper." There are some pluses with this most negative planet. When strong in the natal chart, Saturn adds the qualities of practicality and reliability. There is a feeling of utter reality that Saturn gives which is often misinterpreted as common sense, but which is more aptly

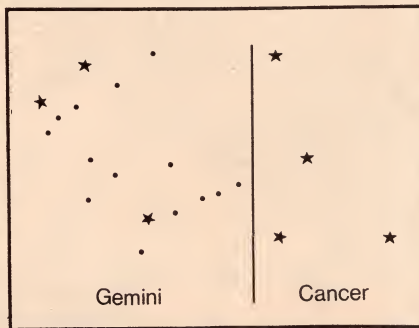
described as cynical resignation.

Saturn in transit to the natal Sun lasts about two and a half years. Currently it is in the last few degrees of the constellation Gemini. You Geminis, and the other mutable constellations, Sagittarius, Pices, and Virgo, will breathe a collective sigh of relief around the very last day of July. At that time Saturn will slip over into Cancer. For two and a half years thereafter the cardinal constellations will experience the frustrations of Saturn. You mutable people can then aid your friends whose Suns are in Cancer, Capricorn, Aries, or Libra, with the voice of experience. During a Saturn transit it seems our best efforts produce very little. We take two steps forward and three back. But the important thing is not to give up. Gains made during a Saturn transit are lasting, though small.

BIRTHDAY PEOPLE

JULY 1 - JULY 8

Your Sun is in the middle degrees of the constellation Gemini. You hold the monopoly on the Gemini characteristic of lightning thought. Mathematics, mechanics, languages, and pure rapid thinking are your best assets. You also are impatient and impulsive, often reckless. You may think a lot, but you seldom stop to think deeply. Unless painstakingly acquired, wisdom escapes you. You do everything with quick passion but are easily bored. Your partners can enjoy a rapid, ardent courtship, but as soon as they get their hair back in place you are nowhere to be found. If they expect you to settle into a comfy, tranquil home life, they are in for a disappointment. You are impossible to tie down. You need to learn to slow down and to feel rather than think. 1975 offers relief from the frustrations of Saturn, which has been bugging you the past two years. You will need to exercise some restraint this year not to go overboard with your newfound freedom. Seek the advice of cooler heads regarding some swift and unexpected changes in your life pattern.



caution!

35

Your attention to page
may seriously affect the direction
of this magazine.

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July 9 – July 17

Your sun is in the last degrees of the constellation Gemini. Your depth of thought can be profound. Of the Geminis you come closer to being a scholar and an intellectual. You are warm and receptive of the needs of others as long as they recognize your leadership. Good health, stamina, and charisma can be yours if you allow sufficient periods away from your ivory tower. Your main problem in relationships is to learn to be gentle with your many admirers. They seem unable to understand that you are only one person. 1975 offers you opportunity to get some pet mental projects off the ground. New thoughts can lead to new gains. This is a year to make spectacular progress if you are willing to accept the changes necessary.

July 18 – July 22

Your Sun is in the early degrees of the constellation Cancer. Strongly motivated and political, you can be the benign and gentle dictator. You mesmerize your intimates, manipulating them through their emotions with the irresistible power of your own. Life to you is an emotional symphony. You operate in the world of feelings and desires. Your desire to be active in social progress adds much to your great public appeal. Your intimates above all must be loyal, or they can wound you deeply. You present a strong public image, but your ego is shaky. You can be all things to all men. Your greatest problems are to learn to be true to yourself and to develop and stich with a satisfying self-image. You must learn that you cannot please everyone, and you most certainly cannot truly please anyone unless you learn to please yourself. 1975 offers a mixed bag of emotional highs and lows for you. Your gentleness will be taxed, and you will need to use restraint in emotions. Keep in mind that you are an extremely sensitive person. Playing with romantic fires can burn you more deeply than it can most people. There is no need to retire from the world. Simply be careful.

July 23 – July 31

Your Sun is in the middle degrees of the constellation Cancer. You are the perfect charmer. You can be a skilled performer in the arts of acting, musical performance, or any activity that distracts others from their cares. You can be the clown and the mime. You act as a mirror for others and can re-create any personality at will. All this talent leaves you with a problem. You find it difficult to know who you are. You sort of pick up bits and pieces of other people and incorporate these elements into your own personality. You love with a depth that often scares less serious people away. You are rather hard to get rid of once the flame has died. But if loyalty and long term relationships are what your partners seek, they have certainly found it with you. You are a terminal romantic. 1975 emphasizes youthful associations and new and exhilarating ideas. This is a year for you to play and to enjoy things. But take care to set aside time for rest and solitude.●

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The menu was in harmony with the decor inasmuch as it contained all of the necessary items such as prawns saute (\$4.25), New York steak (\$7.95), baby beef liver (\$3.95), and two daily specials that night, pot roast, and chicken.

A delicious, hard-crustured sourdough bread opened the meal followed by a dullish but crisply fresh salad (we could have had soup) with a simple Italian dressing.

I selected pork chops (\$4.50), which were a bit overdone but delicious none-the-less, accompanied by apple sauce, which—get this—had been spiked with a powerful curry (I think). Very different. Also we both marveled at the perfect potato Anna—a sort of cooked and then sauted (deep fried?) potato sliced and seasoned, which meant lots of work and successful results. Billy had the veal saute (\$5.50), which was strips of veal sauted with fresh green peppers, mushrooms, and pimentos. The seasoning was subtle but insistent, and again, it was obvious that the chef invests lots of time and love with his craft. A very generous slice of fresh cheesecake (\$1) finished the meal, accompanied unfortunately by weak American coffee, which set off the density of the cheesecake nicely so we aren't complaining. The duo worked superbly.

And we lingered because the music was exactly at the right volume, the room made us feel we were in another

world (not surprising at this end of Market Street), but eventually the theatre called and we floated on to *Me and Bessie*. It was a perfect evening (Billy's birthday), and it's nice to know that there is a centrally located restaurant that is a relaxing experience—no pressure—and a softness that worked.



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It has been some time since we visited Pier 54 and are delighted to report very little has changed — this simply has to be one of the most glorious of San Francisco experiences. It's the ultimate *Key Largo* trip through all the warehouses, empty gigantic ships, and there all fuzzy with fog a tiny light announces you've arrived. The room is heaven, reminiscent of grandmother's and everyone's crazy aunt who lives surrounded by old sheet music, antique-ish furniture, dark woods and the most attractive male staff this side of earth. It's impossible not to chat with total strangers at the other tables because being there is *visiting* and when you visit, being a good little boy, you chat with everyone.

We arrived at sunset (before the fog, this time) and seated at a window we



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were both breathless with the view of the harbor (the *real* harbor and not the fucked up tourist trap around the bend) and the skyline and, eventually, the fog. Highlights of the meal consisted of an onion soup encrusted with bread and cheese, the best coffee we've had in a restaurant this year, and a viciously delicious dildo-shaped piece of pastry with a dark chocolate mousse filling. OK, the Shrimp Marsala (\$6.50) were too sweet and rather tasteless but Al, manager EST person, insists that that is why it's their best seller, and the sole was dry but that's a problem they're working on. Who cares? The ambiance is mellow, the room stunningly original (in as much as it seemed to have happened and was not decorated on purpose) and the staff! (Charlotte said that I was not to describe the staff because then every table would be taken every night and we'd never get in again.) To Al, Ray, Tony and Doug—we'll be back!! •

—Ambrose

Survey: page 35

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Women

WHAT'S A WOMAN TO DO?

by JEANNE CORDOVA

Although I have been a lesbian for seven years, and used to think I knew what being a lesbian meant, I must admit over the last year the feminist interpretation of lesbianism has thrown my political activity in the gay, lesbian, and feminist movement into a quandary.

Recently a friend whom I call a nouveau lesbian (because she recently came into lesbianism from heterosexuality via the Women's Movement) told me, "A lesbian is not a homosexual." Last week I read a button put out by a radical feminist/lesbian collective which read, "We are angry, not gay."

In 1968 B.F. (Before Feminism) I used to read in Webster's, "a lesbian is a female homosexual." A homosexual is one "who sleeps with his (her) own sex." In 1970 I read in that now famous feminist document "What is a lesbian?", "a lesbian is the rage of all women condensed to the point of explosion." Later in that same article I read, "But lesbianism is also different from male homosexuality, and serves a different function in society."

Clearly these are, if not conflicting, certainly different definitions. Clearly they come from different perspectives. The former is what men like Webster understand about us, the latter apparently what our het sisters saw in our lifestyle. In recent years I have come to understand that lesbianism is *not* like (male) homosexuality because in a sexist society such as ours no behaviour of women is the same as that of men. When women *love* (men or each other), they don't "love" like men do. What physical and emotional feelings women derive from sex, are not the same as those which men experience. When women work together, it is not the same experience as when men work "together"/compete. When women talk to each other, they don't talk about the things (money, status, power) that men talk about. Ad infinitum. Knowing this helps me understand that when women love each other and attempt to build a life around their love, they do not love or live as men who love het women and they do not love or live as men who love other men. After I got this through my consciousness I was still left with another sticky conflict which I am hoping to work out.

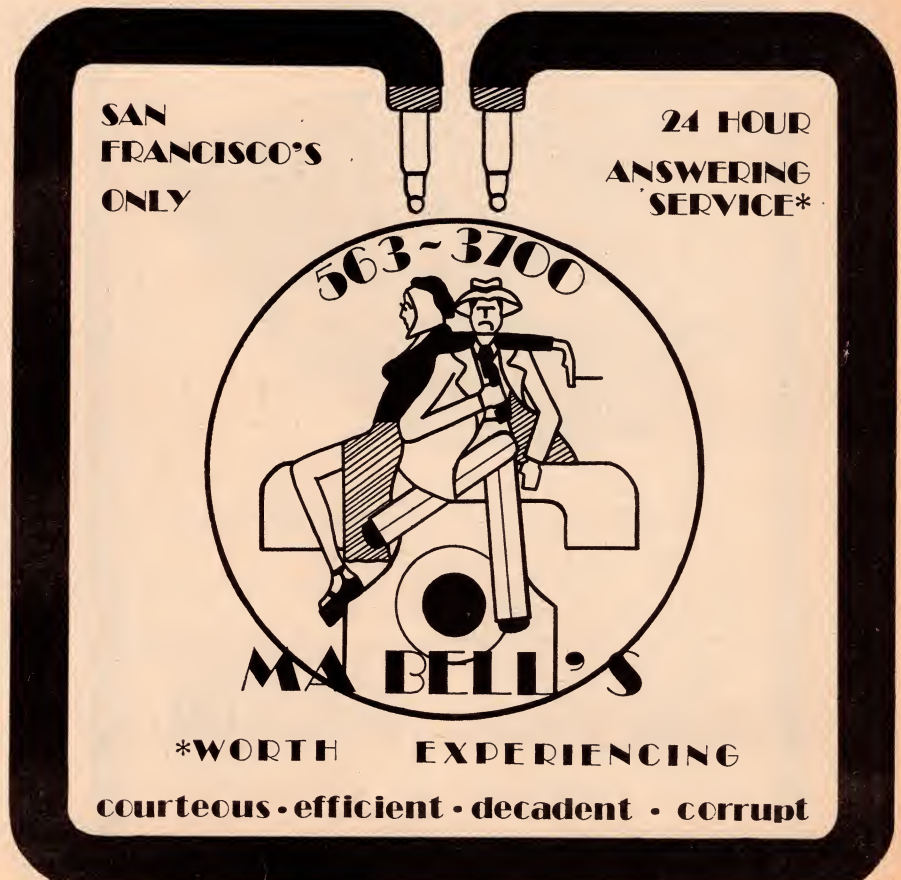
I was a woman-identified-lover-of-other-women for four years before I found the Women's Movement. During that time, I, like so many of my sisters who had the misfortune of falling into unfeminist lesbianism, spent much time in 'the bars' and 'the roles'. Having left the latter I still

remember vividly the former, I still remember walking down the street and having men, and, yes, *women*, say or point 'queer'. I still remember the cops coming in and lining me up against the wall and throwing some other sisters into the wagon. I still remember when *The Ladder* used to say "we homosexuals deserve our democratic rights to live and love the same as heterosexuals." I still remember my father throwing my short-haired lover out of the house and saying, "Don't you ever bring a woman *like that* in this house again." I still remember him and others in my Abnormal Psychology classes saying, "We ought to take all those dykes and faggots and shoot 'em." I guess that means I remember what it means to be *homosexual* in this society.

In the last three years I have learned that to be *woman* in this society is just one step up from the bottom of that dung heap. Maybe being woman isn't even one step up, but I don't want to argue about which part of me (as if I wasn't whole) is more oppressed. It's all lousy. What I mean to say is this. I came into the Women's

Movement, via the Gay Movement. I now realise that when society busts "a faggot" they are showing contempt for "a man who would be a woman," and when the courts take away a lesbian's children it is because she is *not really* a woman. For many years I have known that the "faggot-swish male" and the "dyke-butch lesbian" come in for far greater oppression than the butch male and the latter-day "femme" lesbian. I know this is because the former are overtly breaking role behaviour and the latter are OK because they still look like *real men and real women*. Laying aside this crap, I as an activist, one who wants to help change things, question whether my place is with the movement which seeks to lift discrimination off my sexual orientation or the movement which seeks to redefine the one-down position of my gender. Does a lesbian belong working in the Gay Movement or the Feminist Movement—or both? Or neither?

The ambiguities and oppression we suffer from both woman-baiting-sexism from the gay men and lesbian-baiting from the het women is I think the reason why so many



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lesbians adopt a *dyke separatist*, total Lesbian Movement/identity/perspective. Sometimes I sit in large gay community meetings and watch gay men subtly putting down their femme-male lovers. Sometimes I sit in large feminist meetings and listen to what my "sisters" say, "No, Jane can't be the one gives the TV speech, her hair is too short, and she wears men's boots—what will people think?" I know damn well what a lesbian thinks in either situation. I also know that a lesbian in the women's movement isn't doing much to help her sisters prevent rape. Emotionally I so totally identify with women that it's hard to feel a part of Christopher Street West parades. It's hard to recognise any "brotherhood" with John who got busted on "lewd and lascivious" when last week he said to me, "What do you see in women?"

I am beginning to see, yes indeed, being a lesbian is so totally different from being a gay man. We have little in common but the society that mislabelled us and right now we are rejecting that society and all its labels.

I am tired of telling my gay "brothers". "No! You can't do that to women." I am tired of telling my het and lesbian feminist sisters, "I'm angry *and* gay." Sometimes I think my sisters who have found loving another woman through the rosy glow of a woman identified supportive Women's Movement, forgot—or never learned—loving another woman is *also* being queer. No, being a lesbian is *not* the same as being a homosexual but how do you fight against a society which says it is?

This year I don't see any real place in the male identified gay movement for a feminist identified lesbian. This year I still question, "What is a lesbian-gay-queer woman's responsibility to the thousands of her sisters who still suffer under anti-gay as well as anti-woman prejudices?" Next year maybe someone will write about how to fight a society which would lock me up on two counts. Both, it seems to me, carry life sentences. ●

Jeanne Cordova is an activist and author of *Sexism: It's a Nasty Affair* (New Way Books, Los Angeles). This piece is reprinted from *The Lesbian Tide* (Los Angeles) via *GAY NEWS*

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Travel

LAGUNA

by GARY MENDER

Laguna Beach—a stone's throw from Los Angeles, a short hop from San Diego, an hour by plane from San Francisco—is unique in California, perhaps in the whole country. This oceanside village invites comparison with Provincetown on Cape Cod, with Sausalito in Marin County, but it's more than and quite different from either.

Laguna always has been primarily an art colony, first colonized and still populated primarily by successful artists and craftsmen. This is no haven for "artsy" drifters and groupies in funny costume—rather, a community of individuals who've found what they like to do, do it well, and are busy at it.

Most of the year there's no bustle and rush here; a lazy village dominated by the Pacific Ocean—the graceful wheelings and glidings of the gulls set the pace. Lunch hours are spent strolling on the beach, shoes in hand; cocktail stops are often followed by a trip back to the beach to share a sunset while you listen to the pounding of the surf.

In summer the pattern is broken for a while by—scourge and salvation!—the tourists. They come in hordes; squeeze themselves into every square yard of space; overflow the beds—it becomes impossible to drive and difficult even to walk; there are lines everywhere. But they buy the artists' paintings and sculpture and pottery, pay the shopkeepers' rent, spend well in the local restaurants and make possible another year of happy residence for those who choose to live here.

Nor are they shortchanged. The Festival of Arts alone is worth the trip, and Laguna's Pageant of the Masters is famous around the world. Primarily, the reward is in the beautiful sandy beach that stretches the length of the town, given a unique character and beauty by rocky cliffs and islets formed of lava.

I don't know whether anyone's attempted a survey of the marital status of Laguna gays, but it appears to be largely a "couples" society, with singles showing more interest in the company of friends than the pursuit of partners.

The gay gathering places are **The Little Shrimp**, a pleasant piano bar and restaurant a dozen blocks south of the town's center on Coast Highway, and the **South Seas Room** of the Coast Hotel, a block further south. Neither place is "cruisy" in the usual sense of the word (a gathering place for lonely singles who eye one another with nervous hunger), because

the tone, relaxed and conversational, is set by the many couples and groups of friends who know and like one another. It's a friendlier society than is to be found in most gay bars, and for that reason cruising is easier in some ways, but for people for whom sex must be furtive, anonymous, and divorced from any social contact, it is of course more difficult.




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(More difficult in the bars, but still possible in the area—the beach between the two bars is not lonely after dark, nor is Heisler Park, at the other end of town.)

Dining out in Laguna is disappointing. There are no really fine restaurants, nor any very atmospheric ones.

Choosing a place to stay in Laguna is difficult, not because there are so many places, but so few, and none of them outstanding. The big "plastic" places are absurdly high in price, and infested with children and pets; the smaller places are not much more economical and mostly are rather seedy. A pleasant exception is the **Village Inn**, a little south of downtown with nice rooms and a swimming pool. Not gay, it seems to draw young singles. The price is right at the **Coast Inn** (\$10, \$18, and \$26). Bottom price gets you four walls and a bed for one or two; middle price overlooks the ocean, and top price is on the private beach. Staying there puts you where you're handy to the gay bars and to a stretch of beach that gets "interesting" at night. Although the **Coast Inn** advertises to gay people, its straight owners are not, by reputation, particularly simpatico; they just don't want to overlook any areas of profit. But the service is genial, good ribs are served in the "straighter" of the two bars, and there's a coffee shop for breakfast.

For staying in a place operated by and for gay people, call Jay at **Clift Motel** (714-494-3004). It's a small place located midway between the center of the town and the Little Shrimp. A dozen rooms surrounding a pleasant courtyard, some of the rooms with access to the roofdeck for nude sunbathing. The rooms are quite nicely furnished (some with ocean view), and prices range from \$18 to \$28. They're only a short distance from the beach. The motel will be happy to pick you up at the Orange County Airport, and it accepts popular credit cards.



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Ralph Ovick

Greg Barnet

operators, so I can recommend them. In Laguna that would be too, massive an undertaking; so very many of the shops and services here are gay-operated, nor would I choose to steer you away from their very friendly, sympathetic straight competitors. It's a town that has to be experienced to be understood.

To paraphrase: it was conceived in liberty and is dedicated to the proposition that all men have a right to be themselves, and live their lives as they choose. The people here are doing just that, and being gay does not set one in any way apart from them.

Survey: page 35

Apart from the freedom to live, and to be, Laguna offers many beauties and pleasures—from its beaches, to its shops and galleries, to its towering, sparsely settled hills.

Summer is here—the best time for everything that is unique in Laguna, and the best time for meeting people here from all over the country. Give yourself the pleasure soon!•

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Books

SINGLE MEN / LIVING TOGETHER

NAKED NOMADS: Unmarried Men in America

by George Gilder

Quadrangle/New York Times, \$7.95

One year ago George Gilder wrote *Sexual Suicide*, which was reviewed in these pages. He contended that traditional sex roles were the answer to many problems of the modern world. Now he narrows his concerns to people like himself. He rewards single males of all descriptions and life styles with a massive guilt trip based on what he thinks is best. He argues for the conventional values of super-butth males and very female women. For Gilder it's back to basics. Women must again be placed on a pedestal and worshiped. Men are again regarded as vicious, untamed beasts who need submission to the gentle sex. Christianity has pushed this concept for centuries. It is small wonder that women and men have battled each other for centuries because they expect the impossible.

Marriage is offered as the article of faith for the unmarried man and whatever ails him. He receives the shaft from Gilder for 90 per cent of all crime; he will not live as long as his married counterpart and is said, according to government figures, to have a high rate of illness. But, as the old saw goes, the figures don't lie but liars figure. Statistics must, of necessity, be interpreted and fleshed out. Gilder draws on anthropology and other social sciences to imply that marriage is a matter of uncompromising urgency. His research tells him that single women don't need the knot tied nearly as urgently as single men do. Woman can sublimate her needs, but man is so undisciplined and violent that only a stable supply of roots and security will do the trick.

It is unfortunate that Gilder does not deal adequately with the brute fact of divorce. If marital bliss can become so therapeutic and necessary for *all* the unwed, why do we find the skyrocketing divorce rate? Perhaps society has come to expect too much of this fundamental union. Sometimes compulsory happiness evolves into an overwhelming burden.

Certainly there are grains of truth in *Naked Nomads*. We learn that a shortage of young females exists for males of the same age group

(600,000 females for 1.5 million males). This dilemma has seemingly been produced by the number of divorced older men who develop a yen for proving they can still attract the pretty ones in their twenties. Again we wonder about the high crack-up rate.

Reckless playboy sorts are offered as outrageous examples of irresponsible,

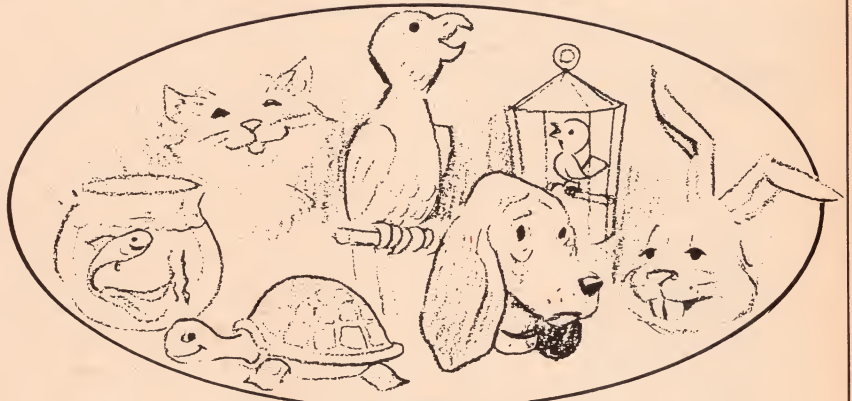
untamed manhood. Many gays will be unable to identify with these characters. The message offered is that single men above thirty are wandering about disillusioned and miserable. They have committed the most grievous sin of all—they failed to conform.

In such a book we should expect a



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chapter on solutions to the problems posed. But Gilder offers only his central thesis. We are pushed into the cold with-out so much as tea and sympathy.

SEX, LIVING TOGETHER and the LAW: A Legal Guide for Unmarried Couples (and Groups)

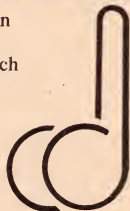
by Carmen Masey and Ralph Warner
Nolo Press, Ca. \$4.95, 187 pages.

New laws are cropping up with such frequency these days that it seems nearly impossible to stay on the straight and narrow even if you try. This is especially true if you live with someone of the opposite sex and both of you are unmarried. This is also sometimes the case with gays. Masey and Warner, two attorneys who are graduates of Boalt Hall Law School at the University of California in Berkeley, are now informing us that you can wind up behind bars if you consummate a sensuous relationship with a porcupine in Florida. You can also land in the pokey if you encourage a person under twenty-one to masturbate. At least this is the situation in Indiana.

Recently my lover and I attempted to purchase some homeowners insurance from Allstate (owned by Sears), and we were informed that two fees must be paid. Instead of charging us one price for the total package, Allstate would force us to pat at least \$70 each since we were two single men living under the same roof. A married couple would be charged only the one price. All protest was to no avail. However, the charming salesman suggested that I list my lover as an uncle or some other member of the family. Then everything would be proper. We reported the action of the salesman to the head office, but, naturally, nothing was done. Finally we were able to contact a gay insurance man.

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Survey: page 36

This incident simply demonstrates that sooner or later a gay couple may run into unexpected complications. We always assume that legal problems happen to other people and not to ourselves.

Much of the material presented here can be useful to single people of any kind in a legal bind. Several tables are provided which show what is illegal in other states, such as cohabitation and adultery. You will also discover a generous sample of legal forms. At the beginning of each chapter our lawyer friends have been clever enough to include "Gobbledly Gook Defined" which explains all the necessary terms that relate to your problem.

All possible situations are covered, such as buying a house, moving, the death of your partner and how to deal with attorneys.

A special chapter has been written for gay couples, and there you will find no-nonsense advice on credit and insurance, adoptions, and employment.

Sex, Living Together and the Law provides a step-by-step guide to everyday problems, which recognizes the dignity and worth of all unmarried people. Here is one reference book for the home that may save you some real headaches.●

—Frank Howell

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Theater

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NOEL COWARD IN TWO KEYS
A.C.T. (Geary Theatre, S.F.)

Review by JAMES ARMSTRONG

Two Keys is two-thirds of *Suite In Three Keys*, a trilogy unified by the setting (a posh suite in a posh Swiss hotel), the waiter (Felix, played by Joel Parks), and the same three stars appearing in each play. (In the original, a few years back, this was Coward's last major work—these were Irene Worth, Lilli Palmer, and Mr. Coward. The director was the same, Vivian Matalon.) Further, they are all writ to be played by middle-aged (at least) actors, and all center on characters corrupted to the core by wealth and/or success. The first, *Come Into the Garden Maud*, has amusing moments and a line or two, but is purest cliché and hackwork. The second, *A Song at Twilight*, is a minor masterpiece of crackling Cowardian wit with a display of ensemble acting unmatched in these parts since the Lunts were here God knows how many years back with Durrenmatt's *The Visit*. Those who see it will never forget it.

Song is a drawing-room melodrama of character, its validity as perfect as its intensity. It was an actors' feast, and with these three superb pros gobbled it up and let us have it, right between the eyes. The monster in this one is an elderly writer of international renown, Hugo Latymer, married to a younger, former secretary, Hilde (Jessica Tandy). As the play opens, Hilde is going to dine with an old friend, leaving Hugo to give dinner *a deux* to Carlotta, his mistress of 30 years ago, more or less at her behest. Why she wants to see him is a mystery. Their affair ended acrimoniously, they have not communicated since. She has been a successful actress and has buried three rich husbands, so it can't be money she wants.

She arrives, a beauty holding age at bay in her face though it shows in her subtly curving spine. After some increasingly acidulous badinage, it develops she has written her memoirs and wants Hugo's permission to print some of his love-letters. He refuses: violently, insultingly. The quarrel is ghastly. He all but throws



Anne Baxter as Carlotta



Hume Cronyn & Anne Baxter

her out. She is almost through the door (this is stock theatre, but oh how it works! when: "Oh, by the way. . ." She has other letters, written by Hugo to the only person he ever truly loved—a male secretary he cruelly abandoned, neglected, and let die alone and in want. Curtain.

In the second scene, he summons her back, and the sparring continued. What does she *want*? She really doesn't know, beyond a vague desire to punish and perhaps make Hugo see what he *is*. Hilde returns, realizes, and joins in. She has long known of his homosexuality, even of the abandoned lover. Her view of Hugo is devastatingly clear and precise, but even so, her loyalty is impregnable. As the play progresses, Hugo's armor of heartlessness is riddled and collapses. He is made to know his monstrosity, that only Hilde likes or respects him, that all is his own doing, the handiwork of selfish fear. The women are alternately at his throat and at each others'.

It is a masterfully orchestrated trio of wills, egos and motivations, circling probing, stabbing. They blaze at one another, die down again to attack from another quarter. For all the violence of many of the exchanges, flaming carnage of wit, the acting is based on nuance. Everyone has not one but several climaxes, and it was a joy to perceive how they fed and bolstered one another in them, how superbly they worked always as a team.


God, what theatre!

Tandy, as Hilde, employed a German accent and manner of breathless perfection, her projection of strength and compassion in the face of Hugo's beastliness was at times heartbreaking. Cronin's Hugo was the realization of a heartless, vicious, power-mad success, hag-ridden that his "secret life" might destroy his carefully achieved reputation. Till the day he died Mr. Coward denied that Hugo was modeled on Somerset Maugham.

Despite all this, however, Baxter, as Carlotta, walked off with this one. Superbly made up as a thrice-face-lifted beauty of 65, her old-lady spine never straightened and she employed her eyes and that low voice in a manner inevitably reminiscent of Tallulah Bankhead giving a performance such as Tallulah was never *allowed* to give in her later years. (Having become a camp-figure, she was laughed at; never taken seriously.)

This is an evening not to be missed. The more so since the like of it will not come to San Francisco again for some time. Lucky Los Angeles will be able to catch it soon at the Huntington Hartford Theater.●

James Armstrong is the San Francisco correspondent for AFTER DARK and has published broadly in several national publications.



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The Most Dangerous Homosexuals

by DAN ALLEN

When I tried to tell my American literature class about the prevalence of homosexuality in our movies and literature, some members of the class balked. They claimed they didn't know what I was talking about, and they hinted that even I didn't know of what I spoke

"Aw, shucks," I said, "maybe you're right."

Of course they weren't. But life is very difficult for college students today. So who was I to add the burden of facing the idea that there is a dangerous homosexuality in America that will overthrow the whole damned country if we don't apprehend, limit, and understand it? Who was I indeed?

To see a glamorous version of the homosexuality I speak of, one can look at the love affair between Robert Redford and Paul Newman as it unfolds on the silver screen. Notice its transcending hypocrisy. One doesn't have to go all the way back to queer relationships between ostensibly straight males in Herman Melville and James Fenimore Cooper, as Leslie Fiedler does.

Fiedler, with all his misdirected machismo did at least admit that Jim says, "Come back to the raft, Huck, honey." No other critic had ever faced up to that; in their male faculty atmospheres they dared not rock the boat. As long as they could blow each other (literally and metaphorically) and blow well-hung male graduate students in private and keep wearing the badges of wife and family to keep their image of maleness secure in Academia, all was well with the world.

This homosexuality I speak of exists in those areas of our life where people of the

same sex congregate and exclude the opposite sex. Further, as I've suggested, it is a society based on hypocrisy. It is the completely male society seen in the business, military, industrial, and education world, a society in which honesty of emotions and



sexuality are suspect and feared.

Hypocrisy comes through the imperative that all members of these homosexual (same-sex) groups act out a gross masculinity, which is a distortion of the Hemingway code, a code that even Hemingway saw was sham. And how Hemingway must have suffered because he felt he had to live under the stringent requirements of that code that does not allow humanity to man or to woman. It is obvious that he suffered; he did blow his brains out, didn't he?

Though Patricia Nell Warren's *The Front Runner* threatens to become the guidebook for liberated gays, there is this dangerous homosexuality present in her book, too. All of the characters in her novel put a premium on masculinity. Androgyny? Forget it. (Moreover, the book endorses monogamy, still relies on the death of gays, and glorifies good old American religion.)

New York literary gossip has it that Warren lied; she didn't get the idea for her novel from talking with a young male track star who was gay, but she first wrote it as a lesbian book. That scared the pants off her, since it didn't fit in with the code. So she rewrote, adding a few drops of amyl.

Since Warren obviously made her choice, I wonder whether she can't be recognized as what she is, a revisionist sow. However, as an older gay male, I have to admit that Warren did a lot for me. She got me to running, and also she has set up a mystique that makes me have to fight off young jocks who see me as the coach while they, in their wire-rimmed glasses and sweatbands, are acting out Billy Sive.

Marvelous. All of us need some drama in our lives, and they can pursue older men without guilt feelings about dad complexes, while I can enjoy being pursued. Yes, it's marvelous, but at the same time all of us ought to note the travesty we're involved in. We're continuing to stay locked in a code, masculinity *uber alles*, while running around the track of our nervous fantasy world. Anyway, who says that young jocks turn me on?

There is rampant homosexuality, galloping same-sexism, in board rooms,



executive suites, and the cocktail lounges of wealthy business males in America. An executive I knew who worked for a utility company in New York admitted that the men he worked with would never allow even token women in their world if they could prevent their entry. "They leave their wives in Scarsdale and Mamaroneck," he said. "They don't want them around the office. Women? Absurd!"

It is a male world which is, in fact, a dangerous homosexual (same-sex) world that keeps a new America from being born. We cannot go beyond the limitations of the fear and trembling associated with sex, and we can't face up to a world without man as boss. I talk about this as it exists in America, for that's where I am, though I suspect that things are worse in nearly every other country. The men are bosses nearly everywhere, aren't they?

Let's go back for a minute to the love affair between Newman and Redford that I mentioned earlier. Notice how often the two men are crooks and how often their being crooks is apparently justified since all the rest of their environment is populated by hoods. It's the Godfather Lie, the

present version of the American Dream—it's okay for the Mafia to kill since Congress is dishonest. Bullshit. This is a tenet of the Establishment—Homosexual-Pharisaism Code: that masculinity, dishonesty, avoidance of tender, honest motives is the only way to go, Bullshit. See how we got into Watergate, children?

I have seen college professors freak out at the suggestion that the gay poems among Shakespeare's sonnets are more earnest and honest than those written to a prostitute. And I have seen the same professors do their mating dances with their sexy, pantherlike male grad students, all of them nearly coming when they discuss the erection metaphors in John Donne. Liars, cheats, hypocrite *lecteurs*—none of them are *my* doubles, *my* brothers!

I have spent much too long watching students recoil with less shock at murder in literature than they do in the face of literature about gay relationships. Ridiculous.

And this brings us to the guts of my gripe. I've lived in a world that has been called homosexual all of my adult life, and I've only recently become aware that *homosexual* is a misnomer. Homosexual is the term for that world of liars, all male, who call themselves heterosexual; that's the biggest part of their lie, for they really hate and fear real women.

I live in a gay world where the gay women and men are aware that they love and participate in sex with people of the same gender. The dangerous homosexual world is all that other world that keeps a code of sexual role-playing. Mostly this world is run by straight, macho men, but straight women who can play a helpless, feminine role receive the second-largest rewards.

I am not saying that gays are automatically above this world; in the same way that the worst anti-Semites are Jews, the worst anti-gays are gay. Those are the gays who have to overact their masculine role if they are male or overact their feminine role if they are female. Yes, Virginia, lesbians can be pigs, too.

Anti-gay gays are the ones who have historically betrayed their sisters and brothers. When the Symbionese Army

scare was at its crest in San Francisco, lesbian bars were overrun with CIA and FBI-hired dykes. "They were rich, but frigid," a gay woman tells me.

What I see as the worst aspect of this world of Horrendous Homosexuals is the dishonesty necessary to continue the act. Time after time I keep looking at the science building at City College of San Francisco, where I teach. From the time it was built in the 30's, our science building has proclaimed, "The Truth Shall Make You Free."

Lately I've felt like a Peanuts comic strip as I say to the building, "Yes, yes, and when will we get at the truth? We can't wait any longer."

My theme song lately has come from a man I consider almost an archetypal Establishment-Homosexual-Pharisaism-Code hero, Dotson Rader, who hides in a straight guise even as he proclaims that he ain't marching anymore. My theme song is, "I Ain't Gonna Lie So Much No More, Nowhere, No Time."

Thanks, Dotson, baby, hypocrite *lecteur*, my brother, my pig.

All you folks out there in Homosexual-Phariseeland, what have you got to be afraid of? Blouaugh! •



Since the Referendum Passed:

June 1976 to November 1976

by FRANK FITCH

BROWN BILL REPEALED

By a vote of 3,114,071 to 3,044,044, the voters of California repealed the actions of the Legislature and the governor in passing AB 489 (Brown-SF). The 50.57% yes vote reinstates as crimes in California sodomy (P.C. 286), oral copulation (P.C. 288a), and adultery.

The *Advocate* asked Assemblyperson Willie Brown Jr. and Senator George Moscone, who stumped the state trying to defeat the referendum, why they thought we lost. Both pointed to the divisions within the gay community, between north and south, rich and poor, Democrats and Republicans, Californians and gays in other states, and so on, which were not healed in time. Willie said, "How many times did I have to step in to settle fights between various factions and ask them to try to work together in the future? The Coalition of Concerned Christians could not have succeeded without help from the lack of commitment in your community," Moscone said.

NO NEW CONSENSUAL SEX BILL

Governor Brown said he would not sign another bill similar to AB 489 if it were passed and sent to his desk. "The voice of the people is clear," he said.

The vote in the state Senate was so close that it would be impossible to pass another bill in the face of an expected veto from the governor.

FEAR AT S.I.R.'s CANDIDATE'S NIGHT

Only one candidate for mayor of San Francisco, Senator George Moscone, appeared at a recent S.I.R. candidate's night. For supervisor, only Harvey Milk and Lloyd Taylor, both declared gay candidates, were present.

For the first time since 1964, S.F. police officers were stationed in front of the 83 Sixth Street location to photograph all those who entered. Only twenty-five of the 300 that were expected ran the gauntlet of exploding flashbulbs. Several officers shouted "fag lover" at Senator Moscone as he entered the location.

The success of the Coalition of Concerned Christians in repealing the Consensual Sex Bill (AB 489) in California's June Primary election has been a disaster for gay women and men throughout the United States. The failure of gay people nationally to make the referendum battle in California a high priority—even more, the failure of California gays to put aside past differences, eschew the apparent joys of attacking one another for imagined or real slights and to join together in the greatest test our movement has ever faced—was directly responsible for the tremendous losses we have suffered in just five months.

WASHINGTON, D.C., ACTIVIST KILLED

Noted and longtime activist Frederick Kennick was murdered and mutilated during a two-hour-long rampage through the office of the Mattachine Society of Washington, D.C., by nearly 100 black youths. Police records indicate that Mr. Kennick called in at 9:04 pm to report vandals entering the office and request police assistance. Officers arrived at the scene at 11:30 pm. As of two days after the tragedy, police detectives report they are still investigating the possibility that Mr. Kennick died as a result of "mutual combat," a phrase used to describe a fight engaged in willingly by the participants. An F.B.I. spokesperson announced yesterday that the F.B.I. has no plans to investigate the possibility that Mr. Kennick's civil rights were violated.

NATIONAL MEDIA FEATURE CALIFORNIA VOTE

All three networks and most of the major radio stations and newspapers surveyed across the country have given page one treatment to the California referendum loss. Typical of the coverage was a CBS newscaster, who stated, "In a first test before the voters, the nation's most populous state voted to make homosexuality illegal." National Gay Task Force calls to the network to ask them to state correctly that only certain sex acts were made illegal were ignored.



EMPLOYMENT BILL DEAD

Assemblyperson John Foran stated it would be foolish to bring AB 633 to a vote in the Assembly. "I would have had the votes easily if the referendum had been defeated," he said, "but now it would be defeated overwhelmingly." AB 633 would have prevented employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. It's now dead.



500 ARRESTED IN L.A.

Last week LA Police Chief Davis ordered a sweep of Hollywood gay bars. In a statement issued to the press, Davis said he could see no reasons for "these felons" to remain unapprehended. "I'm going to make it so hot for 'em here that in a year there will be no queers in L.A.," Davis said.

THREAT TO LICENSES

Sen. H. L. Richardson successfully passed a bill in the California state Senate reinstating "moral turpitude" as a reason for denying or revoking any state license. His bill said, "Moral turpitude will be judged to exist when, for example, there is evidence that the applicant or license holder is or may be a homosexual."

Gay organizations from California to New York have been flooded with calls from doctors, lawyers, contractors, beauticians, real estate salespeople, C.P.A.'s, and others licensed by the state demanding that their names and addresses be stricken from any and all records. The National Gay Task Force, based in New York City, reports that it has lost one-half of its California membership in the last week.

LESBIAN MOTHER LOSES CUSTODY

Ms. Susan Anthony lost custody of her five-year-old son yesterday in a reversal of a previous decision in her favor. The judge in the case decided to review the merits of Ms. Anthony as a mother in the light of recent events. The real tragedy, according to Ms. Anthony, is the fact that Johnny has no other living relatives and will have to be placed in an institution until foster parents can be found who are acceptable.

SIXTH MCC FIRE IN THREE WEEKS

The Metropolitan Community Churches throughout the nation appear to be the focus of amateur arsonists. The burning of the MCC in the New York area raises to six the number of churches torched in the last three weeks. The Rev. Troy Perry was in tears at the news of the most recent loss.



NOBIL CHARGED WITH CHILD MOLESTING

Elanor Nobil, a gay woman elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives a year ago, was charged with the molestation of a seventeen-year-old girl. Ms. Nobil, who was attending a meeting of the House when the event was alleged to have taken place, has been unable to find a single other member willing to testify to seeing her at her desk on the floor of the House.

NAMECALLING IN PRE- ADOLESCENTS (Reprinted from *Psychology Now*)

Dr. David Ruben, in a recent study of the "bad words" used by elementary school children when calling names, reports the use of "fag," "fairy," "fruit," and "queer" is three times as common as it was in a similar study made one year ago.

The above stories are fiction. It is my hope that they will forever remain fiction. To prevent some variation on the above we must make the referendum battle our number-one priority.

Right now we can start the process of obtaining statements against the referendum from non-gay organizations with which we are affiliated, especially churches. Right now we can support the gay organizations that will be helping to organize the fight. Right now we can send in our names, addresses, and phone numbers and list what skills we have that might be useful in a campaign: writing, advertising, media relations, organizing volunteers, direct-mail campaigning, raising money, calling people on the phone, walking a precinct. . . Everyone has something he can contribute. We need every person, every mind, every hand to prepare for this showdown. ●

Make
sure
you
get
yours!



Photo: Guy Corry

Next month in VECTOR:

PHOTO COVERAGE OF GAY FREEDOM DAY PARADE, 1975

FAGGOT IN PARADISE by LEWIS PELTON: A gay teacher discovers Micronesia and vice-versa.

YOU NEVER FORGET THE FIRST by WALTER FEBICK: Prep school, infatuation, shower follies and first love.

SAN FRANCISCO LOOK TO THE EAST (BAY) by RICK DIVAR: A "City" person discovers Oakland's White Horse Inn

THRENODY FOR AN OLD QUEEN by H. KARP: Another pile-driving dissection of New York's soft underbelly

PHOTO/INTERVIEW OF BYRON (above) VECTOR'S DISCOVERY by GUY CORRY

GAY RENO by HUGH MASTERS: Cigarettes and liquor and wild, wild, wild.

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WILDWOOD RANCH

AN APPRECIATION



Now is *not* the time to write about **Wildwood Ranch**. It's Monday morning, and the workload is fantastic, and I'm just *not* into it—and my temptation is to gaze back at two of the finest days I've had in years and rhapsodize. My body is a copper/bronze ad for a tanning lotion, my head is swimming in fantasies of beautiful men, and my cock has a most pleasant ache/twinge from memories even I can't face yet. But deadlines and promises must be met so here goes.

Wildwood is a very, very pleasant 1½ hour drive from the Golden Gate Bridge (or the San Rafael Bridge) up into Sonoma County and that incredible Russian River territory. If you're lucky enough to find it upon the first try, you enter a paradise that can only exist in California.

Processing in was the epitome of simplicity. A naked god said, "If you're looking for Gerry, he's the one in the kitchen with the cast on his leg."

I wandered through the main building noting the red wood appointments, fish pond through the glass double doors, fireplace, game area, etc. and found him.

"Oh, hi," he said, "right out this door and downstairs is one of the bunk houses. There's four beds. Just drop your gear on one that's not messed up."

So I was on my own with creepy first-day-at-camp feelings. All four beds were made up so I chose one from the end, dropped my flight bag, undressed, pulled out a towel (you must bring your own) and aimed for the pool trying to keep an open/journalist's eye but very much tight and defensive. On the way up to the pool a very Berkeleyish man smiled a warm hello.

I reached the pool (it was 10:45 am) in time to hear the crisis of someone's coconut oil, which had turned solid in the night. Scattered on the deck were

twelve or so men who might be loosely described as Valhalla residents the morning after. Each of centerfold material, bronzed, languid, masculine, rugged and obviously gentle. Several animated conversations clearly indicated that friendships were being renewed from another time and most of the groups knew the other group. Okay. I won't hedge. I felt I was in an "in" bar on Folsom Street inhabited by Market/Castro residents and, frankly, I didn't like the feeling. I paid my social amenities to whoever would look at me.

"Hi, I'm Richard."

The responses were friendly and warm but beyond giving me his first name, no invitations to further conversation ensued. Gratefully, I recognized Jim Sterling as the former press person for *Kiss the Sky* and I dissolved into a conversation with him reference my feelings of discomfort. We were thus left alone but I didn't want to be left alone. I wanted to meet and rap and get into heads. So the thought came up, "Sex will be better later on if mysteries are maintained—that must be the Wildwood trip." It wasn't a good feeling—being "appraised" for later on. When I could, I communicated this fact to Gerry, who was confused because this kind of feedback was not the usual at Wildwood.

An inner voice said, "Stop pushing. Relax. Let things happen. Stop wishing you were with your ex and open up. Your vibes are turning people off." And guess what. They did. I have no notes to refer to. (I don't believe in them.)

Who goes to Wildwood? Gerry says they are mainly the 94114 residents of San Francisco—Market/Castro.

ME: What brings you to Wildwood?

HIM: It's a fantastic alternative to

the bars on a weekend. I spend much more than \$20 on booze and brunches.

ME: My feeling is that, although it is an alternative to the bars, it is quite apparent that you've brought the bar "thing" with you, and I feel that in order to meet most of the guests I have to do a bar thing—namely, cruise.

HIM: Relax. You'll see what it's all about, and it's *not* about bars, although I felt the same thing my first time here.

So I pretended to relax, but inside I was seething and very much wishing I was at Bear Wallow talking philosophy and gay lib and books and theatre.

After lunch (tuna sandwiches, borscht, juice, coffee—simple, excellently prepared and informal) the magic started and I can't pinpoint why. But it seemed very right to tell host Gerry, "I'm having a fabulous time!"

One by one, quietly, when it had some meaning (beyond doing duty) I did meet everyone, and between playing Hearts by the pool, listening to *Turandot* on Robert's fabulous cassette hookup, and beer and other chemical things that make us beautiful people, Wildwood had completed its magic. I met Gerry and Ken, our hosts, Joe, a graphic artist, his friend John, a book publisher, Robert, an accountant, Bud, a data processor, formerly long-time member of the San Francisco Opera Chorus, Tony, a student chef, Bret, a grad student at Cal, Bob, a medical insurance person, Ray and Matt, Berkeley people, Pat, Gig, David, a speech therapist, Wayne, a financier (and founding vice president of S.I.R.), Al, maitre 'd and into psyche trips, Greg, a stained glass artist, and Jim who was into metal sculpture with a one-man show about to happen in Bradley's Bar. No pattern. Just people—beautiful people—attractive people—human people—relaxed people—

sexy people—people.

Maximum sleeping quarters are for forty, but Gerry is very much into limiting weekends to an average of twenty-five to thirty. Members, of course, get top priority, and weekends are almost booked for the season until late October rain time. During-the-week is fairly open since this is the first season that Wildwood is open seven days a week and the word isn't quite out yet. Gerry does no national advertising, and the greatest percentage of guests are from the Bay Area. Gerry feels he wants to keep it this way. Many, many relationships have developed at the ranch and continued into the city, and some have turned into "marriages."

Since so many guests are members, they feel they have a stake in the operation and the running of Wildwood and are often possessive of the experience, which runs to helping keep the place clean and taking turns "hosting" the new arrivals. Occasionally the crazies take over. On Memorial Day weekend it was decided that the place was in need of a sophisticated first-aid kit. So an instant "benefit" was held consisting of taking the most beautiful guest and covering him with a mountain of whipped cream, dotted with fresh fruit, cherries, etc. Then for 25 cents to look and 50 cents to eat all you wanted they raised sufficient funds. It was instant and hilarious, as reported.

Adjoining the olympic pool is a hot Jacuzzi pool building which remains open all night, complete with candles and incense. The area is dotted with private and house tents hidden in the trees. The two bunkhouses each sleep eight—one with stacked bunk beds and the other with four doubles placed in a row. Showers and toilets are all around.

(It does not take a Tolstoy to figure out the possibilities for adventure.) Gerry sells nothing so the two outdoor refrigerators are stacked with privately owned stashes of goodies, from beer (don't bring Acme since their containers are not recyclable) to sodas, fruit, nuts and munchies.

The key to Wildwood is freedom to indulge in your humanity (lots of sensuous massage going on all the time—reaching out, touching). There is open and honest sexuality when the mood strikes and after sundown one thinks of a vivid Shakespearean idyll. If you're at Wildwood you *are* beautiful because you feel beautiful, inside and out, and if you wish to express your beauty with another beautiful man (or two) you are free to do so. But you are never pressured to do anything—social, sexual or otherwise. Some couples come for their private communion with each other and nature and are respected.

The main "lodge" houses every game known to the Emporium, a fireplace, books, pillows, music, and a constant perking pot of good coffee. The site has been blessed by more shooting stars than one could think possible. One vista is campingly signed "Julie Andrews Point" and breathtaking in its majesty.

But we keep coming back to people, and this, after all, is what Wildwood is all about. I am not a San Francisco bar person—and, while I admire and lust after so many of the men who inhabit this city, something turns me off, at the same time. It is the hard looks, the coldness, the self-protective shell that envelops men who are beautiful and together enough to know their beauty. I see the key chains, and the pocket handkerchiefs, and the leather jackets, and the jewelry, and the scarfs, and the boots, and the heels, and I am sure it all *means* some-

thing beyond simple decoration, but I'm not sure, and I'm not comfortable when I'm not sure. Meeting these same men in a naked environment and getting into their non-defended heads in a supportive situation was fascinating when, during the evening meal, several donned their "costumes," which then were meaningless because I knew who they really were and the symbols were just that—symbols.

I learned that the most beautiful were as uncomfortable as I was while hunting on Castro or Folsom Streets. Thus, Wildwood is a form of escape from having to be and do certain things. They were as interested in digging into *personhood* as I was, but how the hell do you get through to the person in a dark bar with blaring music polluting the environment? So they reject it (as I do) and head for Sonoma and after a 1½ hour drive arrive in the wilderness and open up—yes, flower—into exciting, enigmatic, interesting, attractive, sexual human beings who are in a position to be whatever they wish—totally, confluent-ly and I felt encased by protective love and respect.

Is this what gay brotherhood is about?

Again the fear of the members is that Wildwood will "go popular" and the trip will be spoiled. Gerry and Ken are determined *not* to have this happen, and both clientele and, especially, members will be limited. So the trip will remain as it is. I am proud and honored and very much humbled to have been touched by Wildwood.

It's impossible to "drop in," and, since there isn't a phone on the property (Ma Bell wants \$750 to hook them up and for that amount of money Gerry feels he'd rather hire a runner), one must call early in the week to make a reservation, and, if it's for the weekend, even then it's doubtful one will get in.

My concept of being gay and male



in San Francisco is going through a flip-flop of philosophical change. My ideas about a gay lifestyle are also in painful change. For that I both curse and bless Wildwood Ranch.●

—Richard Piro

Located 69 miles north of the Golden Gate Bridge atop the Russian River, Wildwood Ranch offers you the incredible beauty of nature and a chance to really relax and enjoy life. Here you can meet new friends or get closer to someone special. Call or write for free inspection trip. No obligation, of course. (415) 864-8446

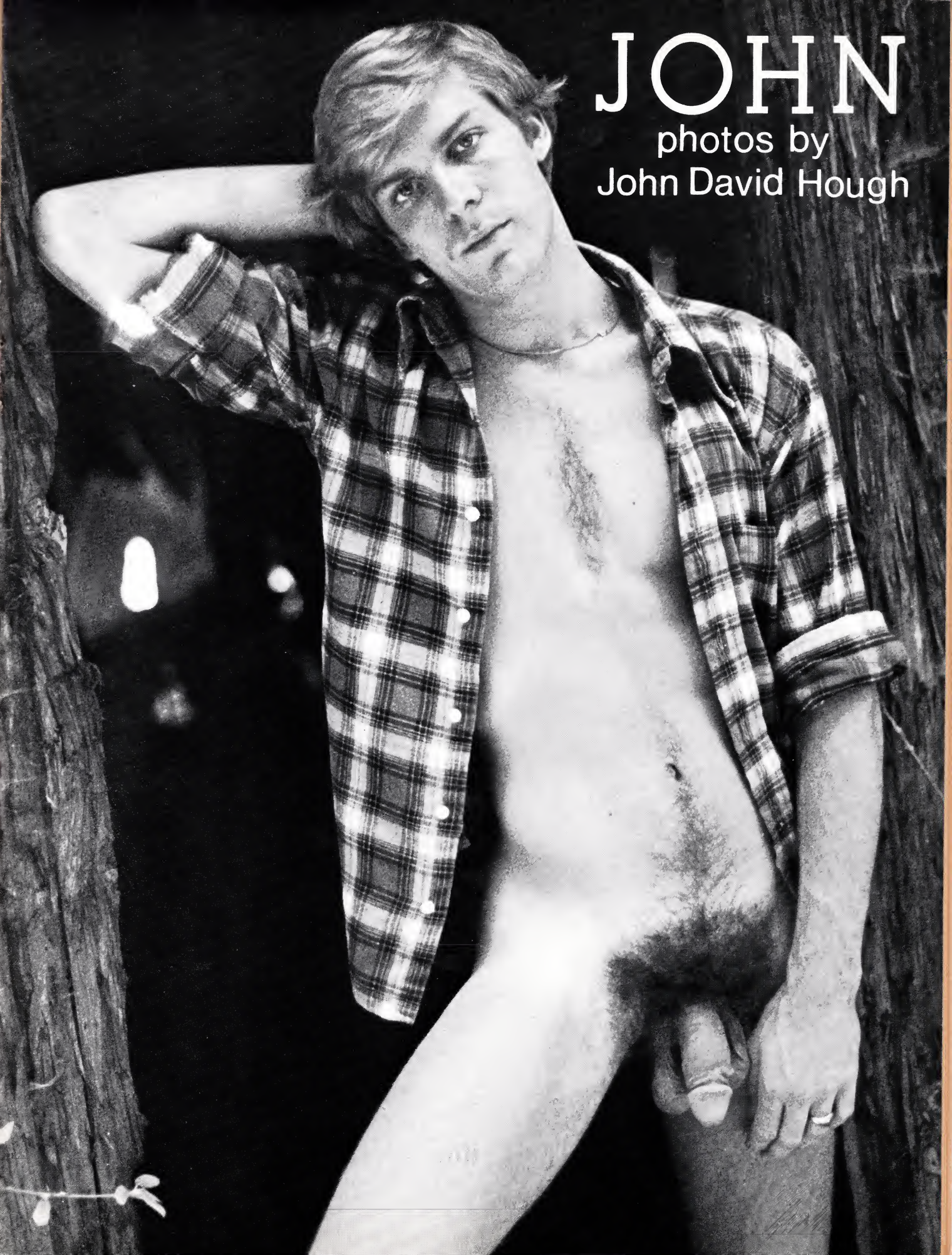
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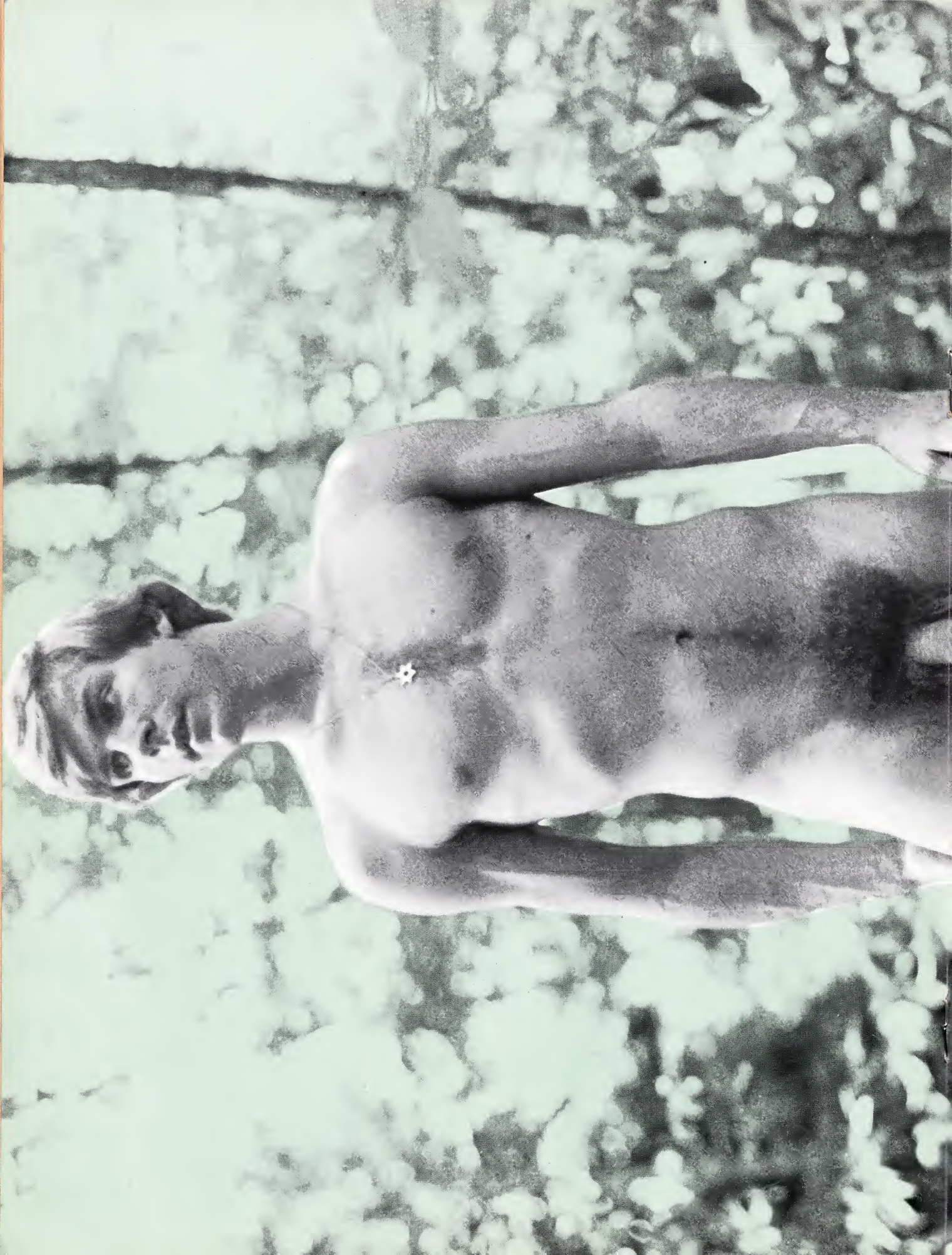
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And what can I say to and about my "special" who pulled it all together, took my hand, and we gathered stars?

JOHN

photos by
John David Hough









WHO READS VECTOR?

The VECTOR Survey

The editorial staff of VECTOR would like to know what our subscribers and other readers feel about our magazine. We include the following questionnaire, and urge you to take a personal hand in guiding our future direction. We are the oldest continuously published gay periodical in this country and perhaps the world, and our existence and growth depend upon how well we address ourselves to the needs and desires of you, our readers.

Please try to answer all parts of the form. In rating the regular columns (books, theatre, etc.) judge them over the period you've been acquainted with them, however brief. As for fiction, poetry, and interviews (feature material), you may have liked certain particular stories or articles, but not others. Feel free in your final comments to expatiate on your opinions of those categories. Name names in regard to your favorite authors and what they've offered you. They'd be delighted to hear your reactions.

We who put out this magazine are each individually of a certain cast of mind, and each of us has his own favorite articles. We are not always in total agreement about everything we do, and often compromise rules the roost. We are changing and we believe the changes are all for the better.

We enjoy being Number One. We need your individual feedback to remain so.

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Upon receiving VECTOR I: ☐THUMB THROUGH IT ALL ☐IMMEDIATELY TURN
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Do you like or resent VECTOR's inclusion of material from other publications, such as
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I would like to see photos of men over thirty: ☐ YES ☐ NO

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83 Sixth Street, San Francisco, California 94103

Tale of Pin Chinn

by Damon deWinters

ONCE UPON A TIME SO LONG ago no one can remember when, in a distant land so far away no one can remember where, there was a great kingdom called Not Here Not Now. The people of Not Here Not Now loved sports, and they played games ceaselessly. Most of their games were war games and could have been called Hit And Run or Grab And Run—all games of battle. One of the games, called Taggedy Faggedy, was to find someone who liked bread and butter and beat him up or subject him to harassment and ridicule. Young men played especially well, for they carried fresh bread and butter with them wherever they went, and they were quick enough to make the tag and strong enough to make it stick. Those who enjoyed the game most, of course, were those who were really interested in bread and butter but could use the sport to hide their interest from themselves. That way they could destroy what they wanted but could not accept.

When someone who liked bread and butter was badly hurt in the game, most people pretended to be sorry, but they were not really upset. Some even slyly winked and quietly smiled. After all, it helped keep the streets clean, and it helped the young men develop their manhood and overcome their adolescent interest in bread and butter. Those who could no longer enter into the game directly would sit in pews and on bleachers shouting encouragement to the young men who were actively engaged in the battle. So nearly anyone could play. Holy Terror had thought up the game, and he provided the



guilt. How the young men handled it he left pretty much up to them.

Near the southern edge of Not Here Not Now lived a little boy named Tar Baby and a man named Far Too Far, who liked bread and butter. Far Too Far was very ashamed of his love for bread and butter because everyone had told him how bad it was. Still, from time to time, he coaxed Tar Baby into inviting one of his little friends over for a party, and eventually they got around to sharing bread and butter. This made Far Too Far feel very guilty; so he and Tar Baby played Taggedy Faggedy, like others who felt guilty about having this interest. Sometimes they hurt the little friend so badly that he died.

Tar Baby wanted to pull away, but the more he struggled to free himself, the more tightly he became stuck to Far Too Far. One night Tar Baby, trying to save one of his little friends, quarreled with Far Too Far and killed him. He then told the magistrates what had happened.

They told everyone. Everyone was shocked. The people blamed those who liked bread and butter.

"Far Too Far was not like us," said those who liked bread and butter; "he was sick."

"The people have not been diligent in their vigil against sin," said Holy Terror. That is what he had always said, and now, he thought, he had been right all along. Since Far Too Far was dead, the people turned their attention toward Tar Baby. They took him before a magistrate, who found him guilty of helping murder many of his little friends and sentenced him to be buried alive for 600 years.

A great crowd of people followed as he was taken out into the desert where he was to be buried. On the way they met Pin Chinn, who stopped to talk with him.

"You have come to me too late," said Tar Baby.

"Why do you even want to listen to him?" interrupted the people, still furious that he had played Taggedy Faggedy with those who may have had no particular interest in bread and butter, and thus had reversed the order of things.

"By examining our course from the past," said Pin Chinn, "we may redirect our path toward the future."

Holy Terror pushed his way out from among the people to confront Pin Chinn directly. "Why didn't Tar Baby talk with someone?" asked Holy Terror, annoyed by the delay. "Why didn't he reach out for help before he became involved in murder?"

"Prejudice isolates those against whom it is directed," answered Pin Chinn.

"Well," said Holy Terror, "why did Far Too Far kill those he was wont to embrace?"

Pin Chinn looked out past Holy Terror at the great multitude; at Tar Baby, his hands bound and his feet shackled; at the magistrates and the town criers who had come from all over the kingdom. He looked at the sad and angry parents and the frightened children. Finally, he turned to Holy Terror and said softly, "You taught him to love least what he desired most."

"You who teach hatred," continued Pin Chinn, "and encourage violence against others must expect eventually to gather the consequences." •

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HAM- BURGER MARY'S & CISSY'S SALOON

an impression by ROBERT BOYLAN

Photography by JAMES MOSS

My first and most lasting impression of Hamburger Mary's is one of a place where long-haired blonds, with thick-muscled upper arms, dropped in from the Stud or maybe Febe's on the other side of Folsom and down the bend. I'd watch them devour their meaty mushroom burgers and be caressed everywhere by their adoring waiters. The food is generally good—damned good for the prices. The coffee is at best pretty bad. The service is aloofly cordial. No waiter there has ever caressed me. My last occasion to stop by, the eggs Mexicali and the walnut pie made a filling and tasty meal, but 65 cents for a thin slice of pie seems quite a bit much.

An enduring memory of the place: About two winters ago I was drinking in Cissy's Saloon, adjoining Mary's, and seated on a sofa near the windows was a stunningly handsome young man, thoroughly drunk, whose trousers' zipper was undone all the way down. He got up and danced with his girl. He went through the motions of a game at the pool table with her. My eyes were riveted on that protruded patch of white underwear, of which he was unaware.

Not that one doesn't often see more there. Generous disclosures of ass. Lots of slits in the Levi's. Midriffs bristly with peach fuzz. Guys without shirts slumming along the Miracle Mile, bespeaking motorcycles and surfboards. Untrammelled teats for those who care about such things. Dykes frequent!

Among the looking-glasses of this Alice's restaurant in No-Wonder Land, its walls crazy repositories of kitsch of the kitschiest kind, one notices a question: "Have you a Little Fairy in your Garden?" Sit at a table. Forget the counter stools (they're very uncomfortable). Best go with someone. Look around. You're bound to observe something eminently edible sauntering around before you depart. One further caution: If loud and persistent Rock is not to your liking, your ears will be assaulted. The clientele appear not to mind. All in all, Hamburger Mary's is a tossup of pluses and minuses. Marvelous and dismally funky. But "ours" as only San Franciscans can understand, and love and cherish and. . .





STAYING OUT ON CAMPUS

by ANDREW MENDELSON



I remember reading, at about the age of thirteen or fourteen, a book by Jess Stearn called *The Sixth Man*. And I remember that afterwards, and for the next several years, I spent a lot of time counting people off, mentally by sixes. I figured that out of my high school homeroom class of thirty-five there ought to be at least four or five others. . . of "us," I might say now, but I didn't know that there was an "us" at the time. I wasn't even sure what word to use.

That may be shy I accept speaking engagements—despite the disapproval of my lover (now ex—, who worries about my career), and my colleagues (who wonder why I'm making such a fuss). I do it so that people will know the words—the right words, and the values that go with them, the words and the values that I never heard in high school and still hear too seldom in college.

There are more than ten thousand students at Stanford; more than half are men (and those who are hetero loudly lament the "Stanford ratio"). But there are only forty students at the Gay Peoples Union. Most of them are grad students. So where are the others? Should I still go around counting by sixes?

Every chance I get I talk to people about being gay. Preferably on their territory, and by their invitation. But

I'll invite myself if I have to: to dorms, to classes, to the dean of the chapel, to peer-counseling groups, to high schools, colleges and community religious groups.

So? What do I do then? I'm not all gay people; God knows, I'm not representative of anything, let alone a kind of sexuality. I'm lucky that I have a fairly good sense of my own identity, and that I'm uninhibited enough to speak freely about my own experiences.

All I can be is myself—though that's important, I think, since I've sat in on too many speaking engagements where the speakers were anything but human. My prejudice, I guess; there's a kind of high-powered gay consciousness that turns me off. Treating the audience as if it has had ten years of T-groups, encounter groups, Esalen experience, and training with Carl Rogers doesn't seem to me the way to let an audience know that you're a person, one with values, feelings, and experiences that you probably prize (though, if you're honest, you'll admit the negative things, too) and that you want to share.

Are we so into where we're coming from that we forget where our audience is coming from? Do we spout dogma and forget to listen? And I—am I being self-chauvinist, if not gay chauvinist, in dealing solely from my own experiences?

Because there are questions that make me angry, questions like "When did you first know you were gay?" (I often reply

with, "When did you know you were straight?"). Or, "What do you think made you straight?"). And particularly anyway I don't think it matters—so I often counter with, "What do you think make you straight?"). And particularly at Stanford, where the academic mindset seems rampant, there is a tendency for the audience to adopt a position of intellectual tolerance (Isherwood calls it "annihilation by blandness"; it used to be called wishy-washy liberalism) that's very fashionable but that precludes any real communication on an emotional level or a level of values.

So maybe I'm antagonistic. I go through the rap of "When did you know you were straight? What do you think made you that way? Have you done anything about it? And have you told your parents?" But I also answer the questions. Maybe by the end of the sequence I've made my point that causes and categorizations aren't important. Does performance determine sexuality? It's chic to be bi (at least in NY and SF); but why then does one "gay" experience make you gay forever? And can't there be gay virgins, too, just as there are straight ones?

Coming out, after all, isn't a one-time experience. There's the first phase, one of wondering, that usually ends when you admit to yourself that what you feel isn't what you're "supposed" to feel; perhaps you even put a word to

what you feel—sometimes technical, usually derogatory, seldom cheerful, seldom “gay.” Phase two—coming out to others—usually happens first with other gays. In bars, in gay unions, maybe in baths and tearooms (but the more anonymous the situation the less it’s a coming out). The coming-out process can extend to one’s straight friends, too. But it usually stops there; seldom does one come out to casual friends, or to people who might never be friends.

Yet, these people, who form the vast majority of those one sees, are usually the ones that need to know most. They need to know that gays are students, teachers, pre-laws, pre-meds, engineering majors, ad infinitum. How are they supposed to get beyond the stereotypes of television and the movies if we, as gays, remain closeted to them?

Every speaking engagement is a process of coming out. And of staying out—because it’s easy to remain anonymous, unseen, protected by our gay and straight friends (who are precisely the ones who don’t need to rethink their values; would they be our friends if they did?)

Sometimes, though not often, a speaking engagement brings someone else out—someone in the audience, someone who’s been wondering, someone who’s been waiting for another person to say the right words. Someone who’s never seen another gay person who admits publicly to being gay, together (sometimes), and happy (relatively), and a person. Words on the page don’t matter much. Dogma and intellectualizing get in the way. People are what matter.

That’s what scares me—the responsibility that speaking to others involves; to relate to them as people, as individuals, and not as a group with a static attitude; to be open to where they’re coming from; to express my feelings, my values, and my reactions, without alienating them. After all, even curiosity—questions like, “But . . . what do you do?”—can be justified. And they can be answered (technically or graphically) while at the same time one makes the point, which I think is important, that it’s not what you *do* but what you *feel* that matters.

It frightens me also that gay people seem sometimes to be their own exploiters. It’s not unusual, as members of an oppressed group, to be stingy with our compassion, with our ability to under-

stand others on a more-than-intellectual level. We have our rap; people should hear it; and it doesn’t matter where they’re coming from, what their values are. So we antagonize, we frighten, we alienate.

And we alienate the closeted gay in the audience. Or the closeted bi. Or the person who just doesn’t know. We fulfill all the stereotypes of sexual chauvinism—intolerance, onesidedness, hostility. They see being gay as being branded, and they don’t like the look of the label.



**Stereotypes
exist
because
we don’t
discard them**

Only when we stop looking at people as types and as categories and start relating to them as individuals—even when they’re in a crowd—can we show that sexuality is not a brand but a state of mind. One makes of it what one wants—from an attitude to a label, from closeted to open to political to chauvinist. If you’re branded by people you don’t know as being gay, does it matter? If you don’t interact with them, if you never see them—except as anonymous faces, perhaps, but not as people—does their opinion matter?

If it does—if you see the label as a positive value—can you interact with them, as individuals, in genuine communication, not in a chauvinist shouting match of anything-you-can-do-I-can-do-better?

Relating to people as individuals means restructuring our attitudes towards other gays, too. It means relating to the new person at the social meeting not as a “new face” (or “new meat,”), but as someone who has probably just gone through an enormous struggle—it takes years sometimes just to walk through the door—and who is possibly confused, probably lonely, and

almost certainly terrified. Coming on with a heavy rap, and a heavy cruise, is *not* relating to this person as a person. It is *not* an attitude of understanding or compassion. It *is*, if you will pardon the expression, acting like the kind of person that gives gays a bad name.

A friend and I recently set up a group designed for closeted and confused gays and bisexuals—for those who don’t understand their sexuality, whatever label they put to it, wherever they fall in the continuum of straight to gay. Along with the few new people who showed up—only two, but does the number matter?—came one of the more notorious cruisers of GPU, apparently under the impression that a rap group was a great way for him to trick with new people (new bodies, that is—certainly not new people).

The action is not typical, granted. But neither is the attitude unusual. We react to new people—especially if they’re young and attractive—with particular interest. If they’re young, good-looking and frightened, a heavy cruise generally sends them away in panic after their first visit. And if they’re not young and good-looking, they’re ignored, and they, too, leave after a single visit—not in panic, necessarily, but often in despair. If other gays don’t care, how could the straights possibly have any compassion?

Stereotypes exist because we don’t discard them. The wrong words endure because we don’t have the courage to say the right ones—not shouting them, necessarily, but saying them firmly, quietly, with conviction.

Coming out is not something you do and have done with. Coming out is a process that continues daily. It entails risk. It means responsibility. And it requires courage, for the most political act is not marching and shouting but simply being open—to everyone, not to a select few. To be assertive, but not antagonistic; firm, but not threatening; honest, but not hostile. No one can say that it’s easy. But it’s necessary—or at least it is for me. I’m not about to go back into the closet. I want to stay out and staying out means coming out over and over and over again.

So to my parents, to my friends, to my colleagues, to my ex-lover: I understand your concern, I appreciate your fears, I need your support. I’m glad you care. And I’m doing another speaking engagement a week from Thursday.●



Little did I realize then
As I walked about my town,
Desire, kept secret,
Warping my life,
That in the twenty stores,
The Seven churches,
The schools, banks, and bars,
And in all those houses
On both sides of the tracks --
That there were, by percentage,
A thousand or more like me.

But for quirk of sex
I might never have left
My town.

Another me
Would walk its streets --
Buy a house --
Watch children grow,
But quirk of sex
Has brought me far --
Miles and years
Far from my town.

But for quirk of sex
I might never have left
My town.

Would I be more happy?
Would I be as wise?

There was a spot
Along Connor's Creek
Where the willows grew
Dense and shadowy
In the summertime.
Country boys,
Half grown and sturdy,
Swam naked there,
And I watched them --
Hidden in shadow.
Maurice Kildare
Dared to wear a flowered shirt
And a cameo ring,
And talked about opera
And what was current
On the New York Stage,
And said he loved Chopin
And poetry and ballet,
And appreciated some
Modern painting.

He was either very brave
Or very foolish
To do that in our town.

When it was reported
That kindly, respected
Reverend Jackson,
While attending a
Church conference
In Baltimore,
Was beaten and robbed
In a dingy hotel
Near the waterfront
By a young man whom
He had befriended --
There were some of us
Who wondered,



Memories of a Small Town

SCOTT FAVERSHAM

Photos: David Green

Biff Daniels —
Star athlete,
Golden boy,
School's handsomest.
I saw him last week —
Too much weight now,
Not enough hair now,
Lines of care now.
Strange to think
There was a time
When I wet-dreamed of him
Every night.

It was ironic, really,
That Buddy Anderson,
Whose favorite sport
Was beating up queers
In the park
By the University,
Should have been gang-banged
In the back of the van
Taking him to the County Jail
For car theft.

Randy Richards —
"Big as a horse"
"Tough as a mule"
"Wildcat mean."

Remember the time
He threw three guys
Out of that bar
For talking smart?
And the stories
You heard about
The women he had?
But one Saturday night
Under the bridge
In Jefferson Park
I learned things about
Randy Richards
That no one else in town
Ever knew —
I think.

When that gruff bachelor,
Lawyer Ellingham,
Died of a sudden heart attack,
Heirs found a closet filled with
Negligees, golden slippers,
Lacey undies, evening gowns,
And panty hose.
Obviously the lawyer
Had a mistress —
Someone quite tall and heavy —
Obviously.

Richard Frommers
Called home one day
From his job in the feed mill.
"I can't bear it any more!"
Was all he said.

He was gone for three years
Before he showed up again.
But he looked much younger,
Everyone agreed.

Perhaps it was his hair,
Dyed now, and styled —
Or the flashy clothes.

He mentioned visiting
New Orleans, Amsterdam,
And some Arab cities.

Arney Weber, Chucky Jones,
Bunk McGuire, Steve Arvell —
Pillars of society now —
Plumber, salesman,
Tax collector, clerk —
Married all,
Fathers all.

Do they ever remember
That rainy afternoon
When we climbed
To the loft of Miller's barn
And lay in the hay
And — experimented?
I do.

When we said goodbye at the station
I kept my arms close
Instead of embracing you.
I kept my hands close
Instead of touching you.
My lips spoke trite phrases
Instead of kissing you.
Men don't weep, or cry out,
Or cling close to each other
In my town.

We always talked so seriously —
And on such a high plane —
And so politely.
It never occurred to me
That perhaps you wanted me
As much as I wanted you.
I didn't realize that
Until I was far away from my town.
And by then it was too late —
Much too late.

I did not learn of love
In fields of flowers in spring;
For me no candlelight and wine,
No moonlit grove, no nightingale,
No lingering touch, no tender kiss,
No gentle sighs.

To put it bluntly —
I learned of love
In the bus station toilet
And the bushes of Jefferson Park.
Furtive, exciting, dangerous, ugly!
Try to understand, my dear,
I've never quite outgrown my past —
And I'm sorry — truly I am.

Unknown poets,
Whose writings on a wall
Absorbed me as no classic ever did.

Unknown artists,
Whose drawings on a wall
I studied as I never did
Galleried masterpieces.

You lived in my town —
Perhaps next door,
Or down the block.

Did I know you?

Shampoo

Washes Out

WARREN BEATTY DISCUSSES HIS NEW FILM

by R. MORGAN ELLIS

George loves women, nothing very unusual. However, George, in three days, makes love to a mother (Lee Grant) and her daughter (Carrie Fisher), attends to his steady girl friend (Goldie Hawn), and resparks a romance with an ex (Julie Christie), who is the mistress of the aforementioned mother's wealthy husband (Jack Warden) and best friend of his steady girl. Certainly a lethal collection of amours, but this is not too remarkable for George Suffers (?) from an unsublimated sex drive. The one catch with George and a continuing joke throughout the film is that George is a hairdresser.

Shampoo is a film that is dividing audiences and critics into two factions, those who enjoy the film immensely and those who detest the film immensely. In addition to starring as the macho hairdresser, Warren Beatty has produced and co-authored this picture. It is truly Beatty's baby.

Situated in Beverly Hills, *Shampoo*'s three days of action fall around election day, 1968. At this time, the volatile circle of lovers explodes, leaving George in the debris of broken relationships.

Recently, Warren Beatty was in San Francisco to discuss with the press his views on *Shampoo*. Asked about when he started working on it, Mr. Beatty replied, "I've been working on it since about 1968, actually before that, 1967. I had always wanted to do a story about a compulsive Don Juan. One that didn't necessarily say that Don Juanism is a manifestation of misogynistic feelings or latent homosexuality. A film that didn't take the old classical Freudian, puritanical dogma that hypersexuality was symptomatic of hatred."

Questioned why he chose the character of a hairdresser and if that was to



destroy another myth, Mr. Beatty answered, "Myth about homosexuality of hairdressers? I don't think that is a myth anymore. I don't think that anybody thinks that hairdressers are gay anymore, but maybe back then in '68 there was more of a feeling that they were. Hairdressers are always with women; he touches them and if the hairdresser loves women, the woman is in a position of a certain amount of vulnerability. He sees her with her hair down. Also, it seems like a nice avenue to certain basic narcissism that seems to be prevalent in southern California and more specifically

Beverly Hills."

I asked Beatty if he didn't think an obstetrician would have been equally as appropriate. "Obstetrician is not a bad idea, which, believe me, was not unthought of. But a hairdresser offers something more unreal about the cosmetics of people, prettifying something."

I asked him why he had not produced a film since the 1967 *Bonnie and Clyde*. "Laziness, indulgence, and I took a long time out of movies completely for political work. There are only a few subjects I feel strongly enough to put that kind of energy into. I've been working with



this and then I never felt it was quite right and then it was."

Still perplexed by the 1968 setting of the film, I asked if the intent towards sexual roles was to show how much our society's attitudes have changed.

"I think whether you call it intent or not, I think it's undeniable that particularly the role of women has changed. George is kind of the dumb blond of the movie. He is the sex object and I think that kind of male consciousness has not changed an awful lot.

Shampoo is especially depressing to men, because it really shows the women using men as sex objects; difficult for us to take. It also gives an undercurrent of something that attacks the nuclear family, in a way that is disturbing. No one repents in the end. It is difficult for the generation that is now 30, a generation that grew up before the pill. For the young people it's not so tough, they say, 'Yeah, that's what happens when you fuck around so much.'

When George is not dashing off on his motorcycle to one of his eager loves, he is found in the beauty salon. The owner of the salon is Norman (Jay

Robinson), who is cast as a screaming faggot, Norman and Ricci (Mike Olton), who also portrays a faggot, are the only other hairdressers with substantial roles in the movie. Disturbed by this tired image of the homosexual hairdresser, I asked, "Because the film promotes certain views on women's liberation or sexual philosophy, plus a definite attitude towards politics, there also seems to be a backdoor statement about homosexuality or the image of a homosexual. By using the character of a hairdresser, it seems the scenes in the shop, with the focus on Norman and Ricci, support the view of the faggot hairdresser. Do you see this as a 1968 attitude or a present one? It seems you have promulgated the image of the homosexual hairdresser."

"I did?" he replied defensively.

"Your movie did." I answered.

Pause. "I don't know what to say about that. Could be we were a little heavy on the character of Ricci and Norman, because there were no other hairdressers. Maybe you're right, I don't know. Sometimes you broaden things when you try to be funny and that was the source of a couple of gags,

maybe some cheap gags. We only dealt with three hairdressers, one was heterosexual and two homosexual."

One cut from Lester saying, "Too bad he's a fairy" to a shot of George blowdrying a woman's hair while her head hovers around his crotch leads to another question. Doesn't this sequence play on the stereotyped image of a homosexual hairdresser? In defense Beatty said, "I would think the two homosexual characters equate to my part, since my role is so much bigger."

Just like the facile and cheap political theme, Mr. Beatty admits to, though does not apologize for, the cheapness of the homosexual images in the film. Audiences do not see the hairdressers as 1968 characters. They laugh at the image with a 1975 mentality. The modern view is necessary for the joke to work.

Hollywood no longer makes films with blacks rolling their eyes. It's time they became aware of other minorities. Ann Weldon, a black actress in the film, comes across as straight as possible, without making her white. Dare Beatty make a joke about her to evoke Lester's views on race?

The intention of the film is good, but the structure falls apart. Unnecessary bits, such as the momentary pathos evoked by the death of Norman's son or the childishly absurd portrayal of a politician singing Indian songs, lend no perspective to the picture. Our society has changed but not as markedly as Mr. Beatty thinks or demonstrates.

Shampoo would have been more valuable if it had been set in 1975 and showed us where we are now, rather than showing from where we have come. But, the best laid plans of... ●

INTO THE STREETS



Why be in a gay parade?

by RANDY ALFRED

Randy Alfred, an author-activist now living in Berkeley, California, was involved with the planning of the 1975 San Francisco Gay Freedom Day Parade.

In late June parades were held in San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, Boston and other cities major and minor throughout the United States. These are variously designated as the Gay Freedom Day Parade, the Gay Pride Parade, or the Christopher Street March. The last of these appellations refers to the location of New York's Stonewall Inn, where a spontaneous uprising against raiding policemen in June of 1969 flared into the Concord and Lexington of Gay Liberation. There had been important prior events in the gay struggle against oppression, much as the Boston Tea Party preceded the American Revolution. But the Stonewall Rebellion is the symbolic beginning of the modern gay movement, and so each year near the end of June we celebrate our unity and declare our political strength in large gatherings.

Yet, despite the large numbers participating in these events in the past, many gay people still refrain from them. Many who should be in the streets merely stand on the sidewalks and let the parade pass them by. What are their reasons for doing so, and why should you participate, anyway?

When we analyze these reservations and motivations, we should be aware of three different, but certainly interrelated, levels of impact. First, what will participating do for us individually? How will it make us feel? Second, what are the effects on our community of gay men and women? If we feel good about ourselves, we can be open and honest with, and accepting of one another. If we build strong and supportive communities, we can aid in the personal liberation of individuals still struggling to unlock the doors of their closets. Third, what impact do these parades and other events have upon straights? How effective can they be politically, as public relations? Can we project our newfound pride and power to further our liberation in terms of social acceptance and legislative victories?

Some people think that gay parades are passe. They were in a march or two, a few years back, when the idea was new. Now it seems like yesterday's fashions, and they wouldn't be caught dead in anything so terribly dated. This is the kind of nonsense responsible for the annual articles on the death of Rock and Roll. The press isn't interested in it anymore; so people pretend that it's simply not there. But no matter how many times it's been buried, it refuses to give up and die as directed.

Similarly, some people no longer concern themselves with environmental issues; it's no longer the rage. Well, if ecology is a fad, it's the last fad, friends. And if Gay Liberation and community solidarity are just passing fashions, we might find out too late that our growing public acceptance and recent legislative progress may be passing fashions, too.

Now is not the time to assume that we have won all that is rightfully ours. A coalition sponsored by right-wing Legislators and fundamentalist Christian churches is planning a referendum to repeal California's newly enacted Consensual Sex Law. This legislation, sponsored by Assemblyman Willie Brown, will legalize (as of January 1, 1976) private sexual acts between consenting adults, gay and straight. A growing anti-Gay backlash now threatens to put this repeal measure on next June's California primary ballot. Meanwhile, P.T.A. groups and others are seeking to exempt public employees from the provisions of Assemblyman John Foran's AB633 which would prohibit discrimination in employment on the basis of sexual preference.

In New York City last year Intro 2, a similar civil rights bill for gays, was defeated by an anti-homosexual front supported by the city's firemen and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese. In Boulder, Colorado, gay rights legislation was repealed by the voters in an election that also recalled council members who had

enacted the law. The much-publicized gay marriages in Colorado have been stopped, and the legality of those already performed has been called into question. We must struggle and be ever vigilant to preserve rights that our ours, to consolidate our victories, and to build new ones. Political apathy is easy but expensive.

CLOSETS

Clearly, though, many gay people don't take part in the parades because they are still in the closet. Either they have not acknowledged to themselves their own gayness, or they are self-aware gays who feel they must still hide their preferences and their lifestyles from anti-gay friends, families, employers, schools, and various institutions. We cannot expect the former to march, but their existence is itself further reason for the rest of us to participate. The more we are visible, the more we show that we feel good about feeling and being gay, and the more we show ourselves to be mutually supportive, then the more we encourage these sisters and brothers to take that all-important step of self-acceptance.

"Well," says the self-acknowledged but still closeted gay, "what if someone I know sees me?" There's no better place and no better time to be seen. You can march proudly in the clear light of day among thousands or scores of thousands of gay persons. The parade can be a liberating experience for you personally, and your participation should encourage others to march and add to the political clout of the parade by swelling the ranks of the visible gay electorate.

Remember, it's no crime to march. And it's not a crime to *be* gay either, even where penal code reform hasn't been enacted. The law may regulate your behavior, but it can't tell you what to think or who to be. It's impossible to arrest the truth. If you're not worried about legalities, but you still have close friends or family who don't know about your gayness, Gay Pride Week

is the perfect opportunity for you to come out to them. Bring them to the next parade or demonstration. Why not ask them to march with you?

NOT DIFFERENT?

There are gay people who see no need to march because they do not believe that significant differences exist between gays and straights. "I'm no different from the next guy, except sexually," said an acquaintance of mine. "Why should I march down the street screaming 'Gay is Good' when I'm just like everyone else except that I happen to like men. Why be proud? It's not an important difference."

This argument just won't wash. We are different. (Thank heaven!) When I was just coming out, I had felt otherwise for a while. Gradually, as I have become more self-accepting, I've recognized that I'm not just like anyone else, except. . . My perspective, my patterns of interaction, my creativity, my entire consciousness have always been shaped and colored by an apartness or distance from the conventional assumptions of everyday heterosexual reality. Gay is good. Creative homosexuals have a special vision of the games straights play, and we can often see through a lot of the ideological excrement associated with those games.

But we do play our own games, and these often include as much (or more) sexist objectification and manipulative use of each other as is found in the heterosexual world. This is the result of oppression. And being oppressed for our sexuality is another way in which we are different from straights. This oppression ranges from the obvious murders and assaults upon us to discrimination in jobs and in housing to far more subtle and hence more treacherous kinds of abuse.

PSYCHIC VIOLENCE

Psychic violence takes its toll in negative self-images, which must be overcome in our personal liberation and in our common struggle. When gays treat each other poorly (as we all too often do), it is due usually to a lack of self-esteem. This is unfortunate, for we already have enough to do combatting the continued, day-to-day and year-in-and-year-out oppression by



Photo: Guy Corry

straights who are sometimes evil or sometimes well-meaning but dreadfully unenlightened.

The price of accepting this oppression and not allowing ourselves to express our true and deeply felt emotions is a slow-killing of our very beings. "We must love one another or die," Auden's advice to all humanity, has special meaning for his gay brothers and sisters. When we learn to love each other, we must also teach the world to love along with us.

So we must march because we are *different*. We have a long history and a current plenitude of great and creative men and women in many fields of human endeavor, and so we are *proud*. We are subject to political, economic, social, and psychological oppression, and so

we are *angry*. We must show our strength and indicate that we won't put up with being put down anymore.

Not only will this produce positive political results, but it will also enhance the self-images of each of us and our collective awareness as communities. In no small measure will the presence of a strong community of proud individuals bring hope and confidence to gays who are still learning not to hide and hate themselves.

IMAGES

But what kind of images are we providing for each other and for the straights we're trying to influence? A friend's mother living in Manhattan's East 80's once asked, "Convertibles filled with

muscle men in swimsuits: this is a political statement?" I believe that it is a political statement, although perhaps not one with which we would all agree. And it will take a considerable amount of education both within our own ranks and in a political ministry to the straight world for it ever to be fully understood.

The committees that have been planning these parades have had some disagreement on the extent to which these events should be "serious" political demonstrations reminiscent of the peace marches in the '60s, on the one hand, or on the other a campy display of floats, flesh, wigs, and glitter. Those who remember the early marches, which were decidedly more politically conventional, often feel that the parades have been taken over by the bars and co-opted by the "fashionable types." (This charge is interesting, as some of the same people who make it also indicate that they dislike parades because it's all been done before.)

When threats not to participate are carried out, contentions such as the above soon become self-fulfilling prophecies. Withdrawing from a group because it's unrepresentative can only increase its tendencies in that direction. In cities in which bars and baths have in fact "controlled" the parades in recent years it was often so only because noncommercial, community organizations failed to represent themselves in numbers commensurate with their membership and influence.

If you object to the images of gay lifestyles projected by the parades you've seen or been in, staying out from now on will only serve to ensure that your own style will not be adequately represented. If the great gay mass of "just ordinary people in ordinary clothing" are not present to create new images, then all the old images *will* be reinforced.

WOMEN

These stereotypes include the straight impression that the only homosexuals are men. Gay women have rightfully objected to the male domination of most "mixed" organizations, of the parade committees specifically, and of the parades themselves. Many gays, both women and men, consider drag queens to be insulting and antifeminist. Yet, if gay women do not attend parade planning sessions

and thereby force the men to confront their own sexism, whether massive or residual, the parades will probably remain relatively inhospitable environments for strong, antisexist, profeminist consciousness. If gay women do not participate in large numbers in the parades, the myth of lesbian invisibility will continue.

We may argue that even the presence of large numbers of lesbians and of gay businesspersons in coats and ties, gay teachers, students, office workers, and whatever, does not deter the media from focusing almost exclusively on the most outrageous floats and the most garish drag persons. So if we are ourselves made uncomfortable by some other individuals and groups, and if news coverage and even the eyewitness impressions of heterosexuals on hand to watch will be selectively filtered to fit only well established prejudices, why bother to participate at all? This sets up a Gresham's law of public relations: "Bad" images will drive out the good.

This is where we must engage in political re-education. We must work with the media to ensure that their coverage of these and other events shall be fair and balanced, and that we are given the same consideration and treatment as racial and ethnic minorities are accorded. Many gay groups now have media committees to further these goals, and recent efforts in this direction have proven promising.

But first we must set our own house in order. Those who are put down for conforming to gay stereotypes may just as easily put down their accusers for overly conforming to straight models and lifestyles, for being gay Uncle Toms. What good is it to make a political statement to straights if each of us cannot do so in our own way? Although I personally regard the parade as primarily a political march, with secondary celebratory functions, it would be no more reasonable nor any more just if I imposed that view on everyone than it would be if the drag persons were to insist that everyone must parade in drag.

WHAT'S POLITICAL ANYWAY?

I may have my own values and tastes, but it's ludicrous to expect everyone to conform to them. Censorship is out of

place in the gay parades or anywhere in a free society. I have opposed moves to censor our parade even if it means having to risk such lapses of good taste as a float representing KY, or a covey of nearly naked men cavorting in a colossal can of Crisco. Who is to say what is political (and thus uncensorable) and what is merely "obscene"? Radical drag, or genderfuck, is clearly a statement about sex roles and is purported to be a liberating personal experience as well. (Remember, we are concerned with the impact of parade participation on individuals as well as with its public effects.) Perhaps the great public show of flesh is actually a protest of the somatophobia (body fear) of Western civilization. The personal is political, and the political is personal.

So some of us may regard others in our parade as continuing sexual objectification instead of fostering personal liberation and interpersonal respect. Others might object to a closety prevalence of straight definition among the more conservative in lifestyle. Still others will find it unpleasant to share space with churchly gays inasmuch as anti-gay religions have oppressed us for so many centuries. Women and men may not relish the idea of marching closely together. All variations on the theme of apartheid suggest themselves, and all are fundamentally ridiculous.

But at least once a year we should be able to set aside these differences and achieve a sense of solidarity and unity. Unity is not uniformity. If we cannot allow each other personal freedom, how can we expect the straight public and straight politicians to do so?

Our diversity is our strength, and it is also the essence of our gayness. We are free spirits, and we must accept, and indeed celebrate, each other's differences. This is our political statement, and it is a profound one. Diversity is life, and the destruction of diversity is death.

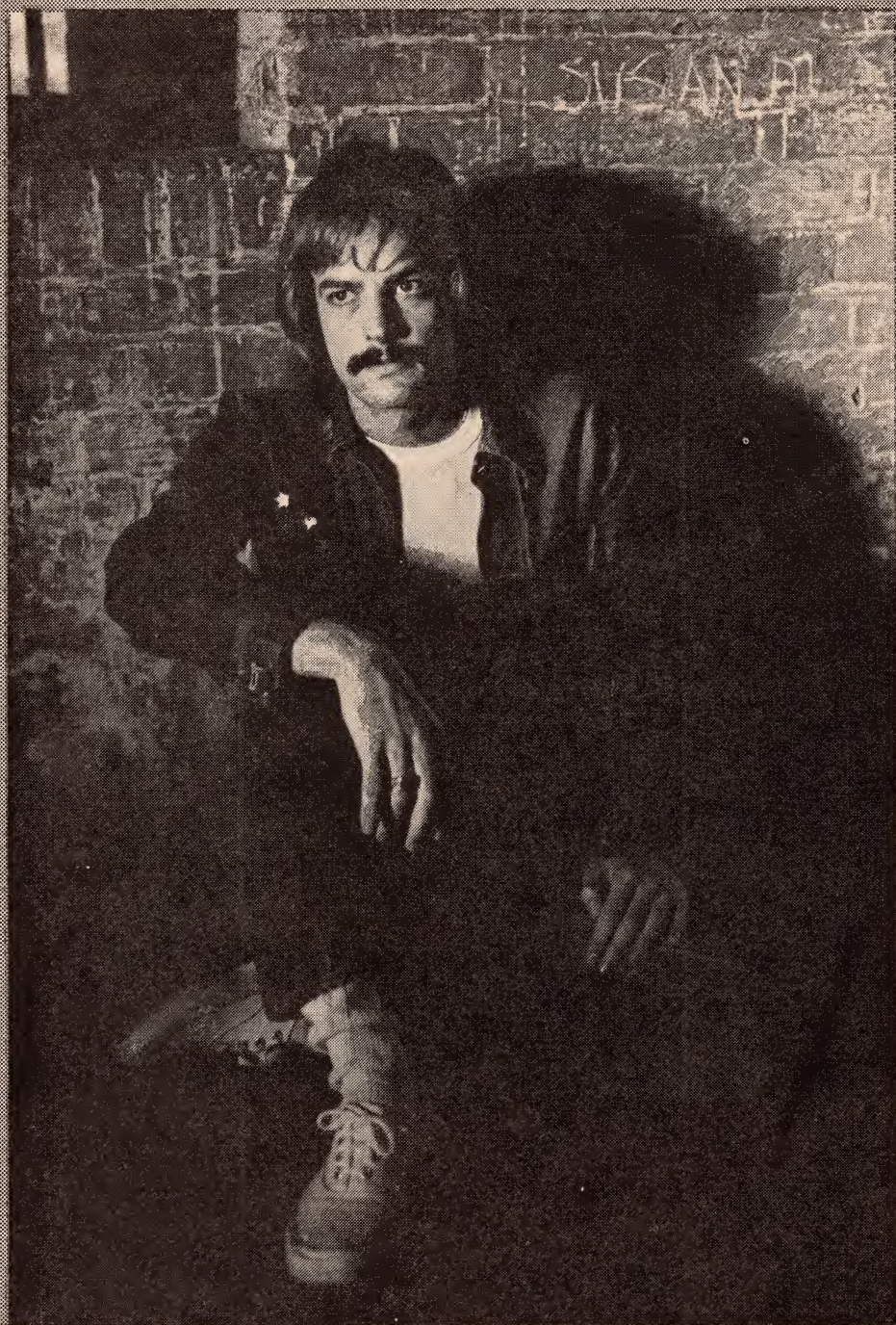
If you skipped it this year, come out into the streets next June (or the next time there is *any* celebration of gay in your town) and be part of the diversity. Be yourself and get high on our strength and our beauty. Most of all, you should participate because the day will be truly gay. Join the festival. Its name is life, and its face is love. ♥

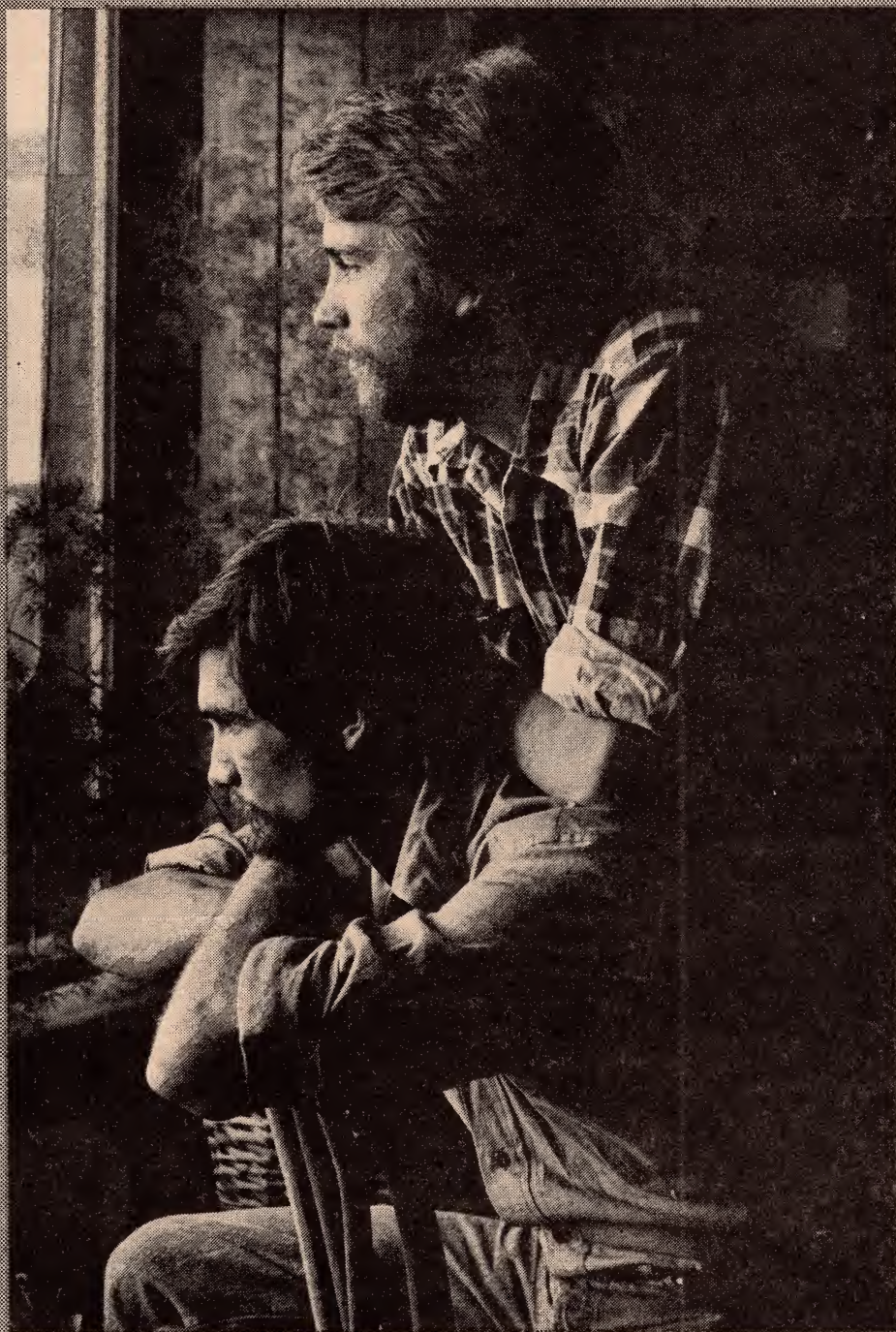
WINDOWS



the photographic
art of Guy Corry







designs in photography by guy corry (415) 626-3223



Illustration: R. W. Borg

ROBBIE

by H. KARP

"You want to know what I feel when one of those old men has my cock in his mouth? It's simple, man. I feel power. I own them, man. I own those old dudes. When they've got their hands all over me, they're mine. I'm in charge. It feels wonderful."

New York City is strange.
Other cities have pimples on them.
Little ones.

San Francisco, outside the Haven
after the bars close, is grotesque.

And London, in Piccadilly Circus, is
peculiar. But both these cities, like most
cities, are for the most part placid. Grimy,
depressing, maybe; but they are not
covered with the pervasive, palpable
sense of strangeness that covers New
York. All of New York. No corner is
safe, no tiny enclave is straight, in this
town. Everywhere, everywhere you look,
dreamlike New York stares back.

Christopher Street at 11pm on Friday
in the spring. Gorgeous. Like panthers
the people move, touching, not touching,
barely touching. The street is high; the
music so thick it hangs in the air like a
canopy.

Eighth Avenue in the Twenties at
about 4 o'clock in the morning. The
leather bars have closed, and strange gangs
of Puerto Ricans rush up and down, shout-
ing at each other in Spanglish, marching
past the studs who stand on the corners,
keys wrapped around their hands, menac-
ing the moon.

The Port Authority Bus Terminal,
where it is never night or day, but always
some harshly fluorescent time in between,
and the people move like entomological
specimens about to be trapped in a pre-
serving fluid.

And the little streets under the Brook-
lyn Bridge where the people walk slowly
up and down and do each other in crumb-
ling doorways until the whole little neigh-
borhood smells like sex.

Fantastic place, New York, filled with
fantastic people.

Once I came out of my apartment early
in the morning, the sky still gray with
edges of pink just starting to glow, and
saw, silhouetted against Central Park,

three elegant hookers and a one-legged
man doing a slow and stately dance.

In the middle of all this a street
would have to be something, wouldn't
it, to be thought of as the strangest
place of all.

Fourteenth Street is.

An unusually wide street for New
York, it cuts, fat and bleached-looking,
straight through the Island from the
decay of the docks on the West Side to
the slums and housing developments on
the East Side.

It is jammed with stores. Stores filled
with so much merchandise, it spills into
the sidewalks. On both sides there is a
panorama of sleazy materials, trashy
panty hose, ghastly pink plates, Christ-
mas decorations, misshapen pots and
pans, truly ugly works of art.

To make the merchandise even more
attractive, there are barkers in front of
the stores; screaming, mostly in Spanish,
about the joys of the shit they're selling,
the wonders of the paintings of the Sac-
red Heart of Jesus on black velvet and how
no hacienda can afford to be without one.

And music, too, each store blaring its
own, the golden blackness of Marvin
Gaye blending with Salsa. So much music,
in fact, that often it just gets to be too
much for the customers and they dance,
whirling, stomping, shouting, in and out
of the plastic shower curtains and the
velveteen hot pants.

There are bars, too.

And restaurants blowing hot chili
smells into the air.

And Sabrett carts.

And junkies, either dealing or nodding
out.

And fantastic bums asleep in the middle
of the sidewalks, oozing juices that trickle
down to the curb: Blood? Piss?

No one on Fourteenth Street knows

No one on Fourteenth Street cares.

Right in the middle of all this is a
purple orchid of a place, a place that's
peculiarly New York. And peculiarly
Fourteenth Street.

It has an elegant name for what it is,
reduced to its barest essentials, a whore-
house. It's worked like a club, but, as in
many enterprises of this sort, the whole
thing is sort of confused.

You are, I think, supposed to pay
\$10 for membership to begin with and
then \$4 every time you go in, but when
I got there the woman selling tickets
said I didn't have to join if I didn't
want to.

I didn't want to.

"Just give me four bucks, honey,"
she said. "Well, wait. Are you going to
take off your clothes?"

"I don't know," I said. "Do you
have to take off your clothes?"

"Oh," she said, "you haven't been
here before, honey? Well, you'll see."

I paid the four bucks.

You walk into a small room with a
round bed in the middle. Off to one
side is a bar. The bartender, a reasonably
muscle, fairly good-looking guy, is
pouring little glasses of awful red wine.

"It's free, man," he says to me.

"Take one. Take two."

He is wearing only a G-string, and I
stare at his ass as he turns around. He
catches me looking. "That's not free,"
he says. "See you later," he says, smil-
ing brilliantly.

It is pretty crowded.

Average age of the crowd is forty, I
estimate, but there are wild swings at
both ends. There are two men there,
grotesquely fat, who are, minimally,
sixty-five. There is a delicate boy who
can't be more than eighteen.

I go up to him.

"Hi," I say.

"Hi," he replies. He looks uncomfor-

table. I feel as if I am doing something wrong. Is talking to the other customers something not done here? Is this one of those places where we are all supposed to be invisible to one another?

I plunge ahead anyway.

"Have you been here before?" I ask

He smiles warmly. This, apparently, is a safe topic. He has sensed I am not coming on to him.

"Oh, yes," he says. "I come here all the time. This is one of my favorite places in the whole world. They change the guys all the time, you know."

I don't know.

"I mean they have different guys every time. Not all of them. Some of them stay. They're really the popular ones, I guess. Like Robbie. I like them anyway."

"Do you like this place better than the bars?" I ask.

This is the wrong topic. I have stepped outside the delicate line. He smiles again, waves vaguely at someone, excuses himself.

One of the fat men is staring at me.

"Why don't you take off your clothes?" he asks. "That would be so nice."

"I don't think so," I say.

"There's still time. If you take them off now, they'll give you your money back."

I look puzzled. So he explains.

"See, if you take off your clothes at the door, they let you in free. But if you wait until the show begins you only get a free pass for next week. Nice idea, huh?"

"Why don't you take off your clothes?"

"Me? The way I look? Listen, they let me in free if I promise to keep my clothes on." He bursts into laughter. "No, no, no, only kidding, only kidd-

ing. I don't like to take my clothes off. It's because of the way I'm built. Although there are people who like all this." He grasps a huge roll of fat on his stomach and shakes it at me. "How about you?"

"Hun uh," I say.

"Listen, no offense, I understand. You like the bartender?"

I nod.

"You can have him. During. Or after. He's not expensive. You want me to arrange it?"

At that moment, the lights begin to blink on and off.

"Oh, shit," the fat man says. "The show's going to start. It's too late for you to take off your clothes now. We better go in." We start to move toward the next room. "Hey, wait a minute," he says to me. "You want to meet me after the show?"

I shake my head no.

"Not for free, not for free. What kind of guy do you think I am? How about thirty-five dollars? I don't mean all night, I'm not cheap, just one time?"

"No, thanks," I say.

"Come on, it'll be easy. I'll do all the work. I have poppers."

We are being swept on with the crowd now.

"I'll see you later," he cries. "I'll get the bartender, too." We are in the theater now. It's a large loft room with a circular, very small stage. The seats, three rows of them, are arranged in a U around the stage, leaving about ten feet in front of the stage clear.

As soon as we are seated, the lights blink off. There are nervous giggles, a collective catching of breath. Rustling. It reminds me of the Kiddie Matinees I used to go to.

A spotlight appears, and the master of ceremonies bounds out of one of the



three arches behind the stage.

"Welcome, welcome, welcome," he shouts. "Let me tell you about the fire regulations first. We don't want any roasted fairies, do we?" There is a comfortable giggle at the word "fairies." We are all happy, it seems, to be identified. It makes us feel closer, grouped. He tells us about the fire escapes and the fire doors and urges us to keep our heads.

"Now," he says, "now for the show. You've never seen anything like this before. Unless you've been here before. Let me tell you, it's spectacular, it's. . ."

"Get on with it, Zelda," someone shouts. I recognize the fat man's voice.

"Shut your hole, Ethel," the MC says. "We'll get on with it in due course. First, let me tell you that anyone who

takes his clothes off right now gets a free pass to next week's show. How about it? Who's going to take his clothes off? Who's going to show it all, every bit of it?"

Two chubby, nervous types stand up. The MC looks excited. "Two beauties," he shouts. "Let's give them a little encouragement." He begins to clap, and the audience joins in raggedly.

The two stand still for a moment, bewildered. Then they begin to strip. The clapping grows louder. The two seem glazed. Finally, nude, they stand there. One of them has half an erection.

"Beautiful, beautiful," the MC says. "Here are your passes."

"Put it back on," the fat man yells.

Everyone giggles, including the two nude men. They sit down.

"And now—anyone else?" He pauses. "And now—nobody else, sure?—now for *boys boys boys*. Let me tell you one thing, men. We want you to feel free to participate in this show. This is the new freedom, men. Use it. Touch, babies, touch. OK, here it is. *Boys Boys Boys!*"

Diana Ross blasts on: "Touch me in the Morning."

We all shift in our seats. Here it is.

Through the curtains comes Boy.

He is tall, about twenty-five. Good body. Reasonable face. Curly black hair. Mustache. He is dressed in torn blue jeans and a loose, long-sleeved shirt. He is wearing motorcycle sunglasses.

"Here he is," the MC shouts, unseen now, "Robbie!"

The music changes to Rufus. Sexy and black. Robbie takes off his shirt slowly. He seems to be staring at each of us, but his eyes are masked in black. We can't be sure.

His hands undo his belt. He unbuttons the top button of his jeans. Sticks his hands inside. Slowly, sensually, he rubs his cock.

He unzips, and suddenly his pants are off. He is wearing tight cotton Jockey shorts. The bulge of his cock is alarming;

He rubs it.

The audience yearns. Slowly, slowly, slowly, he pulls down his shorts. They are off. He stands there for a moment. Then he jumps off the stage, swaying to the music. He moves to the first row, and the hands reach out to feel his cock, his ass, his stomach. He moves between the rows now, everybody touching him, slipping sly fingers up his ass, over his breasts.

Finally, one man, old, takes Robbie's cock in his mouth. Robbie moans, begins to thrust. He reaches up and takes off his sunglasses. Now he is truly nude. And we see his eyes, full of pleasure.

He thrusts once more and then breaks away from the old man's mouth. For a second he stands in front of us. Then he is gone.

We applaud somewhat shakily.

"Robbie," the MC shouts. "Wasn't he something?" We agree.

"He'll be back for the second act. And, of course, you'll see him at intermission." The audience dissolves in laughter.

The show continues.

There are more boys. Not the same as Robbie. Some of them unsure of themselves, clumsy. Some bored. Some ugly. They wear strange costumes; chains, streamers, feathers. They all walk between the rows, letting themselves be handled, sucked. One gets rimmed, grunting in fake pleasure. The audience is excited. They play with each other, go down. The two pudgy men who stripped earlier jump on the stage and suck each other off.

We applaud.

The MC takes off his clothes, and he and a stripper do each other. In between acts there are comedians, some of them in drag telling pallid jokes. (If all the faggot clerks at Bloomingdale's were arrested, the place would be self-service.)

We all roar anyway.

As a finale to the first act, the entire company—minus Robbie—does a song from "Let My People Come."

The lights go up. We blink at each other. It is strange. We hardly know what to do for a moment. At last, almost in one movement, we go back to the bar. The boys of Boys Boys Boys are all there, circulating, letting us feel their bodies.

I overhear bits of conversation.

"Well, of course, sugar, I'm available."

"I don't spend the night."

"No, I'm sorry I don't get fucked. I fuck."

Robbie is talking, but, obviously, he isn't selling. There is a coolness about him, a distance. He is a benevolent monarch, kind, but set apart.

I come up to him.

"Hi," I say. I am obviously no good at opening lines.

He nods.

"I enjoyed you," I say.

"I know," he says, "I saw you."

"Can you always tell?"

"Almost always. I could tell with you."

"I'd like to talk with you," I say.

"What about?"

"Oh, about this place."

"What for?"

"Well, I'm interested in this place. You know, what you do."

"That's all I do," he said. "I talk."

I pause.

"I don't want you to get the wrong idea," he says. "I'm not hustling. Shit, I don't even give it away."

"Oh, that's all right," I say. (But I'm disappointed. I am.) We arrange to meet the following day for lunch. "You buy," he said.

We met at a small Italian restaurant not the next day (he called to cancel) but two days later.

He was dressed as he dressed for the

show. Same enveloping sunglasses.

"I don't know about this," he said.
"I figure you for some kind of sickie. Am I right?"

I told him I was a writer, that I was interested in writing about him. He looked at me blankly. We ate, hardly talking at all, talking when we did talk, about New York, about Fourteenth Street.

"I love this street," he said. "I think of it as the metaphor of my life."

"The metaphor of your life?" I said.
"For God's sake, what a phrase!"

He laughed. "Oh, shit," he said, "I can't do this straight. Let's finish here and go to my place and smoke."

He lived in a terrible building fairly west on Fourteenth. He had one room, totally bare except for a single bed and two Mexican chairs. It was scrubbed clean.

"Sit on the chair," he said. "I'm going to lie down. I like to smoke lying down."

We smoked a joint in silence.

"I'm twenty-four," he said. "I come from California. Bakersfield. Do you know it? Well, it's a shit place, hot as hell, dry. And so dull."

"What are you doing here?"

"Well, I don't come from too tight a family situation. Nobody really gave a damn about anybody else. After high school, where I was terrible, man, I went up to L.A. Seemed like a good thing to do at the time. I really wasn't prepared to do much, you know."

"So I got there, and I couldn't do anything. I stayed at a couple of crash pads, and I found the library and read a lot. But, you know, I had to do something. I'd never been into sex. Not any kind up to that point. Girls didn't really turn me off either, you know? I noticed all the hustling, of course. I'm not blind. So I thought, why not?"

"The first day I tried it I got picked up by an older dude in a Mercedes. Incredibly beautiful car. He had a house in the Hills. Not a fabulous place, but nice, you

know, better than I was used to. Swimming pool, fur rugs, all that. Well, I was a little nervous because I never did anything. I never used to even jerk off, right? I didn't seem to need that, or I was waiting for what I did need, or something. Anyway, it was like magic, man. You know what he wanted? He wanted me to undress. Slowly. And rub myself. It was fantastic. Suddenly I was so turned on I couldn't believe it. He wanted me to perform for him. And, man, that was what I'd been waiting for."

"Did you do anything else?" I ask.

"Well, at the very end he wanted me to stick my cock in his mouth. And I came for about ten minutes, it felt like that. Man, it was like a clear bright light had been turned on us both. And I felt so fulfilled. Fantastic!"

"What happened next?"

"I stayed with that guy—his name was Robert—for about six months. We just couldn't get enough of our thing. And he started bringing friends around, and I'd put on the same show for them. We loved it."

"Then he got a job in England which was going to last for about a year; he was a movie person. He wanted me to stay there or come to England. But, I don't know, I didn't want to. He bought me a ticket to New York and gave me some money. I have his phone number. If I ever need to, I'll call him."

"Why'd you come to New York?"

"I don't know. It seemed the right place for me, don't you think?"

"Right," I said, "What'd you do then?"

"Then I found Fourteenth Street.

Man, that's perfection. It's all there. To be admired. But it's not real, you know. It's not really a destination; it's a stop on the way. That's what I meant when I called it the metaphor for my life. You laughed at that."

"Not because it was funny. Just because it was unexpected."

"Well, it's true."

"How long have you been here now?"

"About two years. I found some other guys who liked my thing. I worked in a bar. Go-go boy. That sucks. Then I got this job."

"Do you like it?"

"Like it? This is perfection for me. It's the best. You want to know what I feel when one of those old men has my cock in his mouth? It's simple, man. I feel power. I own them, man. I own those old dudes. When they've got their hands all over me, they're mine. I'm in charge. It feels wonderful."

We paused. He is beautiful stretched out there on the bed, beautiful and so distant.

"Don't you want something more? Don't you want a real bond, a relationship?" I ask.

"No, man. This is my job. To be admired. To be wanted. I don't know where I'll end up. Maybe nowhere. But this is where I want to be now. I feed on these people."

"It can't last," I say.

"I don't need you to tell me that," he says. "I know."

We sat for a while longer.

"I should go," I said.

"Got everything you need?" he asked.

"No," I said.

"Well, nobody can have everything, man," he said, looking unbelievably beautiful.

When I was almost out the door, he called me. I looked back. His sunglasses were off. "One more thing," he said, "my name isn't Robbie."

A couple of weeks after our interview I went back to the theater. Clothes on, I waited for the show to begin.

The first act came and went without Robbie.

During the intermission I asked the fat man, who was there again, what had happened to Robbie.

"Who's Robbie?" he said. ●

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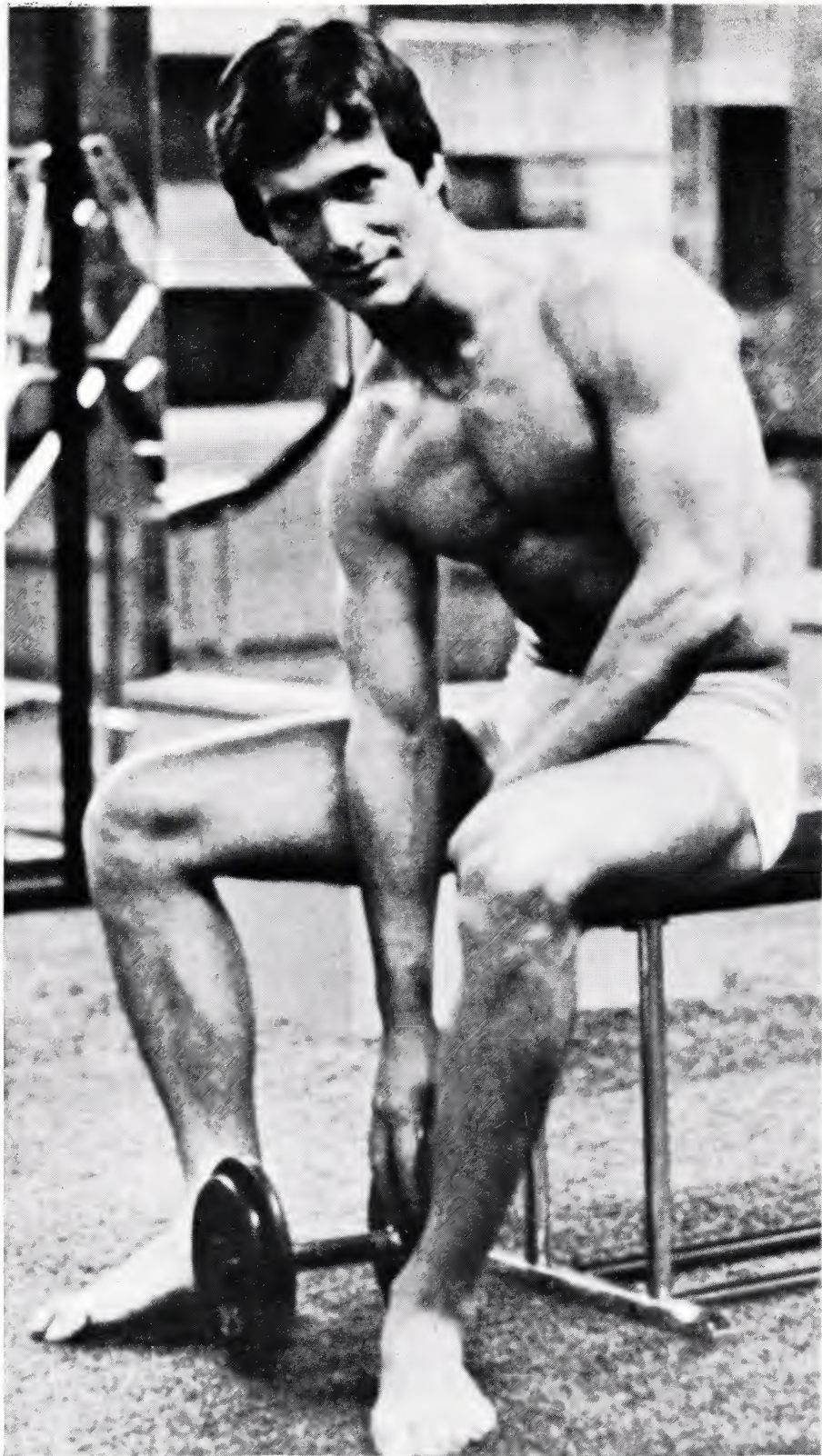
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